



## MPJO-890-01: MOBILE INNOVATIONS LAB

### GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS-JOURNALISM

Tuesdays, 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. | Spring 2015

Instructor: Ken Dodelin

Class will meet offsite and via Google Hangout

- Office hours are by appointment.

### COURSE OVERVIEW

This course offers a small group of students unique and extensive exposure to working with live smartphone applications. During the semester, students will participate in the iterative development of two apps:

- (i) **It Happened Here.** It Happened Here detects a user's location and reveals interesting things – historical events, memorable movie scenes, famous crimes and more – that have happened nearby. The app pulls from a database of more than 2,000 events written by journalists across the country. Developed in 2010 in conjunction with former Georgetown Master's of Journalism students, it has been named a "Best iPhone Tour app" by Travel + Leisure magazine, featured on The TODAY Show and called "a fun new tool ... for serendipitous discovery" by The New York Times. It organically reached #1 in the iTunes paid travel app rankings in 2012 and will receive a significant update early in the semester.
- (ii) **Story Bug.** Launched by children's magazine publisher Cricket Media in 2014, Story Bug combines video chat with a shared reader to enable two people to read together, even when they're apart.

Students will not only research, write, photograph and edit content for apps, but also have the opportunity to apply what they learn to several other aspects of live and pre-launch mobile applications, such as: (a) social media strategy, (b) mobile app performance metrics analysis, (c) launch marketing strategy, (d) product testing and feature refinement, and/or (e) industry best practices research and recommendations.

Specific areas of focus will be paired with individual student interests and abilities. At least two classes will be held at 1776, D.C.'s startup incubator and most other class meetings will take place virtually via Google Hangouts or similar virtual meeting solution.

The primary goal of the course is for students to gain the knowledge and skills that are necessary to work in a mobile-centric, content-based business, while garnering a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities of building mobile applications.



## COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Produce excellent content (text and photo) specifically for use on smartphone devices
- Develop the framework of a user engagement strategy for a mobile app - both internal and external to the app itself
- Speak knowledgeably on the process of designing, building and launching a mobile app
- Generate reports and provide analysis from leading mobile app reporting tools
- Understand the key metrics that drive the success of a mobile content business

## REQUIRED READING

As assigned throughout the semester.

## ATTENDANCE

As outlined by the university, missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-). Absences for classes beyond the initial two will result in further reduction of the final grade. If you are absent for more than four classes, you will be in danger of failing this course.

Punctual attendance is critical. If you have to miss a class – family emergency, medical emergency, crisis at work or other act of God – you must let me know in advance and work out a proposal for making up whatever work you will miss. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary circumstances.

At least two classes will be held at D.C.'s startup incubator, 1776, at 15th & L in N.W. Most other classes will be held virtually via Google Hangouts. The attendance policy relates to all in-person meetings and all Google Hangouts.

In the event of a weather emergency (or any other widespread emergency) that would close the Georgetown Downtown building during one of our class sessions, we will plan to meet as scheduled, through Google Hangout.

## CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE, CLASS PARTICIPATION AND OTHER GUIDELINES

Students should focus on the course material during class and avoid multi-tasking. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions.

In this small class, it is absolutely essential that each student participates regularly and thoughtfully.

## ASSIGNMENTS

There will be two "buckets" of assignments: mobile content development and mobile business analysis.



### Mobile content development

All students will be given weekly assignments in one of the three areas below:

- (1) **Event identification:** Students will be tasked with identifying and researching events for use in the mobile app It Happened Here. Identified events will be entered into a queue for further development.
- (2) **Mobile content development:** Students will be assigned events from the queue for further development. They will perform further research, write summaries, identify GPS coordinates, take or secure photographs, and enter content into a content management system.
- (3) **Editing:** Students will review completed events, publish and QA to ensure proper rendering on a mobile device.

Students will present their project to the class each week, either in person or virtually via Google Hangouts.

### Mobile business analysis

Additional assignments will come from the following options based on student interest, experience and business availability. Students may focus on one or two for the entire semester, or we may rotate students through each.

- (1) **Mobile app engagement strategy development:** Student(s) will be given high-level direction and tasked with formulating an engagement strategy.
- (2) **Mobile app engagement strategy implementation:** Student(s) will be tasked with implementing aspects of the engagement strategy and reporting back to the class on measurable impact.
- (3) **Mobile app user-generated content strategy:** Student(s) will be given high-level direction and tasked with formulating an approach for obtaining and utilizing user-generated content.
- (4) **Mobile metrics analysis:** Students will be given access to mobile metric reporting tools and tasked with providing an analysis back to the class.
- (5) **Mobile app testing and feature refinement.** Students will be given access to pre-release versions of mobile apps and tasked with testing individual features, reporting findings, and recommending feature enhancements.

In each case, a clearly defined deliverable and deadline will be provided to the student(s).

### **GRADING**

Students will receive feedback on a weekly basis. Formal grades will be provided at the midpoint of the semester for projects completed and again at the end of the semester.



Class participation:	15 points
Presentation of progress reports:	15 points
Mobile content development in first half of semester:	15 points
Mobile content development in second half of semester:	20 points
Mobile business analysis in first half of semester:	15 points
Mobile business analysis in second half of semester:	20 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100 points</b>

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. **There are no grades of C+, C- or D.**

A	100-93	B-	82.99-80
A-	92.99-90	C	79.99-70
B+	89.99-88	F	69.99-0
B	87.99-83		

The instructor will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a poor final grade.

#### UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

- MPS Writing Resource Program  
Lauinger Library, 217A | 202-687-4246  
<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>
- Academic Resource Center  
Leavey Center, Suite 335 | 202-687-8354 | [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)  
<http://ldss.georgetown.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services  
One Darnall Hall | 202-687-6985  
<http://caps.georgetown.edu/>

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (Leavey Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu); <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.



## GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code. The Honor Code pledge follows:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

## PLAGIARISM

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in journalism, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs at <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing and the need to credit, check out <http://www.plagiarism.org>.

## SYLLABUS MODIFICATION

The syllabus may change to accommodate discussion of emerging topics. Also, the schedules of guest speakers may require some shifting of the agenda. The instructor will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.



## CLASS SCHEDULE

### **WEEK 1 (TUESDAY, JANUARY 13)**

*Meet at 1776: 1133 15th St., NW*

Agenda: Intros, course overview, build an app whiteboard exercise, app overview, tech setup

Assignment: Download and evaluate, using the Google form provided, It Happened Here, History Here (History Channel), Field Trip (Google). Register as an It Happened Here writer.

### **WEEK 2 (TUESDAY, JANUARY 20)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Discuss assignment. State of the Internet presentation. How to find a writer, developer, designer. Explore analytics tools. PR / HARO. Intro to IHH CMS.

Assignment: Download and evaluate, using the Google form provided, Story Bug, A Story Before Bed, and Caribu. Submit a draft event for an existing city using the IHH CMS. Reading on MVPs.

### **WEEK 3 (TUESDAY, JANUARY 27)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review CMS entries; discuss MVPs; review redmine; scope / assign student focuses; app store optimization.

Assignment: Propose new keywords, readings to be assigned, Google form on ASO.

### **WEEK 4 (TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Discuss proposed keywords for IHH; overview of Story Bug metrics and content opportunities; review roadmap for student focuses.

Assignment: Complete Google form; Download / evaluate Location Scout; TBD work on individual assignments.

### **WEEK 5 (TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review Google form; discuss Location Scout; recap final keywords; students provide progress report on projects.



Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings on app store reviews.

**WEEK 6 (TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects; check-in on stated objectives of course; social media and app promotion.

Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**WEEK 7 (TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects; overview of APIs and why they matter to journalists; review of funnel for IHH and SB.

Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**WEEK 8 (TUESDAY, MARCH 3)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects; how to create a working prototype.

Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**NO CLASS ON MARCH 10 FOR SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 9 (TUESDAY, MARCH 17)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects; create a working prototype of an app.

Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**WEEK 10 (TUESDAY, MARCH 24)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects; managing virtual communities.



Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**WEEK 11 (TUESDAY, MARCH 31)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects.

Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**WEEK 12 (TUESDAY, APRIL 7)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects.

Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**WEEK 13 (TUESDAY, APRIL 14)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects.

Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**WEEK 14 (TUESDAY, APRIL 21)**

*Meet via Google Hangouts*

Agenda: Review readings and progress on individual projects.

Assignment: Continue work on individual projects; readings as assigned.

**NO CLASS ON APRIL 28 FOR STUDY DAYS**

**WEEK 15 (TUESDAY, MAY 5)**

*Meet at 1776: 1133 15th St., NW*

Agenda: Overview of progress during course; student presentations on contributions and recommendations for roadmap.