

Videostorify - How to employ video narratives in your course

Cinematic language and narrative are very powerful tools that enhance educational activities and learning outcome in any higher education course [CRTE Teaching with New Media Audio/Video Communication Tools (2012), Murray, P. (1984), Mayer, R. (2009), Medina, J. (2009)]. This is specifically true in the Humanities where students are not often engaged in hands-on activities or collaborative works. To propose a new approach to the usage of video essays and narrative in the classroom we suggest Videostorify. Videostorify is a cross-media methodology that has been tested during the fall 2012 semester in the course WH03 International Heritage, a lower division course in the World Heritage program. This tip-sheet seeks to suggest a step by step process that faculty members and TAs can adopt to easily integrate digital storytelling and video essays in their courses. More specifically Videostorify focuses on the usage of short movies recorded using smartphones and edited in the publicly available YouTube Editor on the cloud. Using Videostorify students becomes authors of stories on assigned or free topics and then edit the recorded materials in the fashion of an elevator pitch video that spans 30-120 seconds time. Eventually students post their video creations on YouTube and share them on the most popular social media website such as Twitter, Flickr, and Facebook. The difficulty level of this new media methodology is average. Needed time is 2 or 3 weeks.

Handout for instructors - To employ video essays in your classes please follow all the following steps:

1. **Assign a number of topics** to your class as an assignment or final project.
2. **Split the class in teams** (pairs or groups) and assign a topic to each group.
3. **Make sure that every group has at least one smartphone** or cellular phone with video capabilities, email client (or web browser), and a Wi-Fi connection (alternatively use a USB cable to transfer the videos from the recording device to a computer).
4. **Make sure** that every group has at least one active **YouTube channel** (in short a YouTube account)
5. **Prompt your students** to create a short narrative on the assigned topic, write a script for a short video, find 1 or 2 locations, and decide which team member(s) will star in the video.
6. **Encourage your students to share/promote their videos** on their social media.
7. **Develop a consistent grading rubric to assess your students' works.**

Video Essay Checklist - What do I need to make a good Videostorify?

1. **Write a good script** for your video essay that can be performed in 30/120 seconds;
2. **Get familiar with your mobile phone or smart phone video recording function.** Do some tests recording yourself or your friends (alternatively you can use whatever video camera connected to a microphone).
3. **Record your video.** To get a more effective result film 2 different takes (point of views) of the same actor (e.g. front and side);
4. **Email the footage to yourself** using the built-in email client in your phone or any internet browser. Make sure to be connected to a Wi-Fi network for better performance and to avoid charges from your phone carrier. (Alternatively connect

- your mobile phone or recording device to your laptop or lab computer and save the recorded videos in a known folder).
5. **Upload the recorded footage** on your YouTube channel.
 6. **Connect to** <http://www.youtube.com/editor> and start editing your video essay (For a more professional editing use Non Linear Editing (NLE) video software. Windows Movie Maker is NLE software already installed in any UCM lab computers. Otherwise use your laptop and other NLE software (e.g. iMovie, Quicktime Pro, Final Cut, Adobe Premiere, Lighwave, etc...);
 7. **Export your 30/120 second video** in .avi or .mov video file format with a preset or compression that fits YouTube and the web standards.

Handout for your students - Essential elements of a powerful Videostorify (from How to Craft a Killer Elevator Pitch - <http://www.dumblittleman.com/2007/08/how-to-craft-killer-elevator-pitch-that.html>):

Concise. Your video essay should take no longer than 30-120 seconds.

Clear. Use a narrative that everyone understands. Do not use fancy words to look smarter. Your audience will not understand you and you will have lost your opportunity to reach your goal.

Powerful. Use language that is powerful and strong. Deliver the message to grab your target audience's attention.

Visual. Use words that create a visual image in your listeners mind. This will make your video essay unforgettable.

Tell a Story. A short, good story is essentially what you need in your video essay. E.g. a character A with a problem B finds a solution C or faces tragedy.

Targeted. A great video essay is aimed for a specific audience. If you have target audiences that are vastly different, you might want to have a unique message for each.

Goal Oriented. An effective video essay is designed with a specific outcome in mind. What is the message that you want to communicate? Why?

Has a Hook. This is the element that captures your listener's interest and make him/her want to know more about your story. Write a phrase or some words that literally hit your listener.