

Syllabus

FORE 6397: Selected Topics in Foresight: Communicating the Future Summer 2021

Course Time: Tuesday 5:30-8:30 pm US Central Time, **June 8 – July 13**

Course Location: <https://uofh.zoom.us/j/96931755852>

Instructor: Laura Schlehuber

Office Hours: by appt (online)

Contact: mschlehuber@uh.edu / 281-300-6126

Prerequisites: Graduate standing, or instructor approval

Overview

This Summer 2021 is the pilot class!

This course is an introduction to and practice in the tools and techniques used to better communicate the future (both for today and in the future).

As futurists, telling the story can be half the battle. Students will learn the elements of a good story and will practice telling them using a multitude of media platforms (podcasting, youtube, social media). We will also spend time on how to communicate the future IN the future. This is a flourishing field with a wide range of platforms on how best to deliver the message – let's discover together what delivery options work best for your personal voice!

Objectives

The objectives of the course are:

- Learn old & reliable and up & coming ways of communicating
- Reflect on one's optimal style(s) of communicating
- Create and communicate provocative stories using the weekly communication techniques

Readings/Texts

There is no required textbook for this course. Article readings are provided in Blackboard each week.

Approach

The foundation of the course is built around two documents—this syllabus and the schedule, which will be in Blackboard. Students are advised to review the schedule each week, as it may be updated each week as the course progresses.

Class activities

We start most classes with a short overview of the readings and current assignments. The instructor will have a short PPT to cover the topic of that week. We will then review & discuss the readings / styles, with students encouraged to discuss their insights and ask questions.

Online activities

There will typically be one discussion forum question each week. You get two points for posting on time -- one point if late. These points add up – do not miss this (easy) opportunity to boost your grade.

Story presentation

In Week 6, we will devote a class to give each of you time to give a ten-minute presentation, telling a story using the communication style of your choice. Those unable to attend that session may submit a pre-recorded video presentation prior to the start of the class.

Topical Schedule (Details for each week will be listed in Blackboard)

Week 1 Checklist - Introduction & Theory

Introduction This week, we focus on communication and its relationship to futures work. When describing something that others haven't seen, especially when the audience has a hard time believing, it's important to have the tools available to demonstrate a chain-of-reasoning that leads to conclusions. With an array of multimedia tools available, futurists have increased methods of presenting research to clients.

Objective To understand the underlying principles of communication and using readily available tools to communicate the future.

Week 2 Checklist – Enhancing The Message

Introduction In Week 2, we start with the current, familiar tools such as mind mapping, textual documents, and the use of graphics. These basic tools have a wide variety of features that can add to your communication skills and push your ideas further.

Objective Revisit current tools to enhance the message for futures research

Week 3 Checklist – Aural Media Modes

Introduction Week 3 explores the use of sound to enhance the futures message. The key to this assignment is to judiciously use sound without drowning out your message with too much sound. What's too much sound? Let's explore!

Objective To optimize sound files to basic communications; expanding the use of music, sound effects, human voice, to expand a futurist's andragogy in communicating the future.

Week 4 Checklist – Visual Media Modes

Introduction Week 4 is devoted to a wonderful world of visual content. As humans, we rely primarily on visual input for many of our decision-making as well as processing of complex thoughts. Optimizing visual media to describe the unknown has the potential to greatly impact your message to clients that can't picture the future. Mastering this medium will greatly improve your presentation skills as well as introduce more complex thought processes to your audience.

Objective The object is NOT to become the next Steven Spielberg but rather to gain facility with visual media modes that can potentially add to both your academic skills and your professional presentations

Week 5 Checklist – AR-VR-XR Technologies

Introduction XR Technologies is the “umbrella” term for a continuum of technologies, some of which haven’t been invented yet. {Augmented Reality – Virtual Reality – Mixed Reality}. They are increasingly becoming more prominent in business, medical, and military environments.

Objective To familiarize students with AR technologies, and to explore the direction of XR technologies within the workplace and consumer worlds.

Week 6 Checklist – Future Modes & Applications

Introduction Week 6 is directed at the future of Communicating the Future. What is ahead of us that will transform the futures world? How, as futurists, can we explain the unknown and demonstrate to clients the potential for futures work in their respective lives?

Objective Discuss the future of communication tools and applications that would help us to describe a more accurate forecast. Students will present a story using their selected communication style

Grading

The breakdown:

Assignments: 75%

Discussion postings: 25%

Re-submission

Students may revise and re-submit any assignment one time – at any point in the semester before July 13th at 5pm. If you’re not happy with your grade or would like to improve your submission, you can respond to the feedback that comes with the grade, and re-submit one time....provided you clearly indicate changes in different color font and explain as needed. Also make sure you inform the instructor via email that you have resubmitted to Blackboard.

Lateness

For assignments, any submission more than one week late is reduced by a letter grade (10 points). That is the only penalty, so even a very late assignment should absolutely be turned in – in other words, there is no good reason to not turn in every assignment.

For discussion forum posts, on-time posts judged to be of sufficient quality, get two points. Any post more than one week late, earns one point. As with assignments, you can submit any point in semester and still receive the one point. The goal, of course, is to keep up as we go.

Other policies

Academic honesty policy All UH students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UH catalog. Plagiarism, using research without citations or using a created production (such as other people's words) without quotations or citations, will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course. Internet sources must be credited according to the sites recommended citation guideline if available. If no citation guideline is provided by the web source, then the date, URL site owner, and author must be included with the web material used.

Disabilities: If you have a disability and need a special accommodation consult first with the Center for Students with Disabilities, telephone (713) 743-5400, and then discuss the accommodation with me.

Incompletes: A grade of "I" is given only in cases of documented emergency or special circumstances late in the semester, provided that the student has been making satisfactory progress. An Incomplete Grade Contract must be completed.

Withdrawals: Refer to University of Houston schedule at www.uh.edu to determine dates to withdraw without evaluation from a course. Last day to withdraw or drop without a grade penalty (you will receive a 'W') for **Summer 2021** is **July 7, 2021**.