

AECT 2000

Storytelling Studio, 3 Credits

Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor
TBD

Email
AECT@design.gatech.edu

Drop-in Hours & Location
Rich Building Studio
Classroom

General Course Information

Description

This studio course will give students a foundational understanding of storytelling practice across multiple media platforms, and help them hone their own voice, vision, and craft as storytellers. Students will develop their storytelling skills through exposure to multiple techniques. They will hone their abilities to analyze story structure and the ways story functions within various genre and media.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

This course has no pre-requisites or co-requisites. That being said, we recommend that students enroll in Creativity Lecture/Lab, Leaders in Progress and Service, and Creative Coding and Emerging Technologies Lecture/Lab prior to taking this course.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes for the course include:

- The ability to identify story arcs, archetypal story structures and disruptions to these structures, and story genres across stories and media.
- The ability to creatively translate a story from one medium to another, the impact of medium on the experience of story, and what components of story exist across media.
- The ability to convey a compelling story with stakes, and understand what makes a given story “dramatic.”
- An understanding of the role of storyboarding in storytelling for visual media.
- The further development of collaboration skills for tackling creative problems in a group setting where each person’s creative contribution is celebrated.
- The further development of critical thinking and feedback skills that can help students analyze and iterate on creative work.

Required Course Materials

This course will including readings excerpted from the following texts:

Sketchbook: Composition Studies for Film by Hans Bacher
Backwards and Forwards by David Ball
Prepare to Board! by Nancy Beman
The Power of Myth by Joseph Campbell
Wired for Story by Lisa Cron
The Actor and the Target by Declan Donellan
Screenwriting 101 by Film Crit Hulk
Storytelling as best practice: How stories strengthen your organization, engage your audience, and advance your mission by Andy Goodman
Story proof: The science behind the startling power of story by Kendall Haven
On Filmmaking by Alexander Mackendrick
5 C's of Cinematography by Joseph V Mascelli
Story by Robert McKee
The Medium is the Massage by Marshall McLuhan
Save the Cat by Blake Snyder

“The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore” by William Joyce

<https://vimeo.com/groups/222527/videos/35404908>

The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore by William Joyce and Joe Bluhm

Grading Policy:

Fairytale storyboard: 10%
Midterm paper: 10%
Fantastic Flying Books Project: 20%
Final Project: 40%
Studio attendance and participation: 15%

Description of Graded Components

Studio attendance and participation: 15%

Many assignments in this course are not graded, but are essential to learning. Active engagement in studio both as a creator and as someone providing critique is critical to this course.

Assignments

Fairytale Storyboard - 10%

Storyboard a classic fairytale for a medium of your choosing with a specific audience in mind and a strong point-of-view. Think carefully about how each shot set-up contributes to the story that you are telling. This is an individual assignment. This project will be done in four parts:

Midterm Paper - 10%

Compare and contrast the storytelling in children's book and short film, *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore*. Does one more fully leverage its media form? How and why? Is one a stronger piece of art? How does the intended audience for each impact the choices made in the story? How does the medium of each impact its storytelling? This paper should be 5 pages long, double-spaced, and cite and analyze at least two readings from the course. This is an individual assignment and no AI may be used.

***Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* Project - 20%**

The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore is an award-winning short film and a children's book. Both tell different versions of the story, suited to the medium and intended audience. Your assignment is to retell this story in yet another medium. You are welcome to re-focus the story through the lens of a different character, change the story structure to focus on a different trajectory of action than those most highlighted in the original, etc. Media you can explore may include video game, immersive interactive experience, visual installation, and more. While a full realization of your vision may not be possible in the time allotted, we ask that you prototype your idea and give a presentation that gives us a sense of the full arc of the piece in addition to an experience of a tangible prototype (eg. the opening and closing pages plus and outline of a script for a play, along with a sketched scenic design or an outline for a game along with wireframes for what the game would look like and the dialogue used in the first and last sequence of play). AI may be used as a collaborator in this project, but you must be accountable for all final creative decisions made and shown in the presentation.

Final Project - 40%

You will work in teams to develop a concept pitch for a story about which you are passionate in a medium that excites you. The pitch should allow us to understand the characters, the world, the story arc, the design, and how the story will be executed in the medium you have chosen. We should also have an understanding of the target audience and the objective of the material towards that audience. AI may be used as a collaborator in this project, but you must be accountable for all final creative decisions made and shown in the presentation.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

According to policy, grades at Georgia Tech are interpreted as follows:

A	Excellent (4 quality points per credit hour)
B	Good (3 quality points per credit hour)
C	Satisfactory (2 quality points per credit hour)
D	Passing (1 quality point per credit hour)
F	Failure (0 quality points per credit hour)

Please see the Registrar's breakdown of the grading system for more information.

If this course is taken pass/fail, a C (70% or above) will constitute a passing grade.

Course Policies, Expectations, & Guidelines

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, honor, and respect. Especially in this class where we are doing something as vulnerable as speaking publicly about the things we care about, developing a supportive and respectful classroom environment is imperative. I, along with Georgia Tech, expect that you as students and that I as a professor act according to the highest ethical standards. [Please review Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the [student Code of Conduct](#).

Plagiarism is a serious offense.

Plagiarism in speech is just as severe an offense as copying someone else's work in a written assignment. I trust that you will thoroughly document the words and ideas of others in every assignment, including speech outlines. In the written assignments, we expect that you will use either footnotes or parenthetical citations. You are welcome to follow whichever bibliographic format you prefer (MLA, Chicago, etc.), so long as it is consistent. We will discuss ways to cite sources orally in your speeches. Any use of AI to generate content or edit content, written or oral, must also be cited. If in doubt, please ask.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [please make a time to discuss your learning needs with me as soon as possible \(either through office hours or email\) and also contact the Office of Disability Services \(404-894-2563\)](#) to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. If there are additional ways that I can support you as a learner beyond those required by the office, please let me know of those as well, and I will accommodate whenever possible.

Participation, Attendance, and Illness

Active participation is vital to this course. For studio, you will be evaluated on active, prepared participation in:

- In-class exercises
- Discussions based on reading/viewing assignments
- Generous, thoughtful, constructive feedback in response to creative output.

That being said, if you are ill, we ask that you call into class and participate remotely rather than coming to class in-person. If you are ill, and scheduled to present, you may choose to present remotely without penalty or swap slots through prearrangement with another student in the class. Absence from class without remote participation will be considered unexcused unless you have a doctor's note, or it is a pre-arranged absence due to religious observance, required GT business, or accompanied by documentation from the Dean of Students' Office. If you are absent from class due to an **excused** absence, you may make up participation points by writing a one-page response to the course readings due for that class, complete with citations, and submitting it to the instructor via email no later than two weeks after the absence.

Collaboration & Group Work

Most projects during the semester are collaborative, but papers you write should be entirely your own. Any responsible creative use of Chat GPT should be cited as a part of your process, independently fact-checked, and written up in your reflection papers. No chat GPT whatsoever should be used for storyboarding unless explicitly specified by the assignment or in writing any papers submitted for the course, even for editing purposes.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

If you are scheduled to present and you are unprepared, late, or absent, the event will not be rescheduled. You may, however, choose to switch assigned presentation dates with a fellow student. It must be a date for a presentation in the same unit. Please inform the instructor in writing, ccing the other student with whom you have arranged the swap, PRIOR to the date of either student's presentation.

Written assignments submitted late are subject to a 10% grade reduction per 24 hours of lateness. If an extreme illness or personal/family emergency prevents you from submitting an assignment on time and

you need an extension, please email the instructor prior to the deadline, and the instructor will consider it.

AI Policy

AI should only be used when explicitly noted in the assignment and should always be cited appropriately and independently fact-checked.

Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

If a weather-related event affects campus operations, I will at my discretion either cancel class or pivot to digital instruction. Should the class be digital, participation will be evaluated as if it were an in-person class.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Student Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Audience engagement is critical to the success of this class. Please turn off all cell phones for the duration of class. If you need your cell phone ringer to be on due to a personal or family emergency, please inform me prior to class, and I will make an exception for that specific class. Cell phone use during class will otherwise result in a zero participation grade for the day.

You may take notes using laptops or tablets during lecture portions of the class, but please close all devices when listening to speeches and during discussion. Printouts of class readings for reference in class discussion are encouraged.

Campus Resources for Students

The Communication Center is a great resource for you, where you can get one-one-one tutoring both on writing and on presenting. If you have an upcoming presentation or any other public speaking assignment, you can **reserve a rehearsal room in Clough**. **You can make an appointment for tutoring/coaching here**. A list of resources for undergraduate students' academic success and information about advising can be found at Success at Tech.

At Georgia Tech, we are invested in your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A comprehensive list of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being (<https://students.gatech.edu/student-resource-guide>).