

## The Art of the Interview: A New Media Storytelling Lab



### 10-session Hybrid-Learning Course [Interactive Course Overview \(Subject to Change\)](#)

**Course Materials:** Computer or tablet for online webinar participation; all course reading, listening, and viewing materials are free online resources

**Instructional Team:** Betsey Schmidt, Julia Steinberg, Sherwyn Smith, Lisa Kapp

**Student Instructors:** Tucker Kirchberger (Wesleyan University) Andi Wiley (Wesleyan University)



### Course Description

This new media storytelling lab will prepare students to conduct interviews with insight and care. Ethics and a journalistic sense of what shapes an authentic narrative will inform our approach to this essential element of audio, video, and print journalism. Our instructional team, guest speakers, and media experts will guide students as we explore new media storytelling technologies ranging from podcasts to short-form video. Design-thinking and collaboration with peers will be essential to mastering the process of crafting, recording, and editing final portfolio projects.



### Course Goals

1. Collaborate with a dynamic team of students, educators, and journalists to develop advanced online communication skills.
2. Learn interview techniques from the best models in print and new media journalism (The Paris Review, The New Yorker, CNN, NPR, PBS, Wall Street Journal).
3. Learn interview best practices: researching interview subjects, preparing questions, and conducting meaningful interviews—practice active listening.
4. Select the best final media form for your interview and work with peers and instructional team to craft, present, and revise the interview.
5. Digitally archive your final interview project in a format compatible with leading online college applications (e.g. the Common App and the Coalition for College Access).



### Final Portfolio Project

By the end of the course, students will have collaborated to craft a meaningful interview in a new-media form of their choice: podcasts, short-form video, blog posting, or print transcript of interview. Audio and video interviews will be 4-7 minutes long and edited accordingly.



### Drop in Orientation Session

**Note:** There will be a required kick-off orientation session before Week 1 to equip all students to use Google Classroom and digital portfolio tools.

**Instructional Team**



**Elizabeth Hun (Betsey) Schmidt, Co-Lead Instructor**

Betsey has a PhD in literature from NYU and a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University. She has taught American and global literature at Barnard College, Sarah Lawrence College, and The New School, and middle and high school humanities and creative writing classes at a number of New York City schools. She worked as a literary editor and freelance journalist for several publications, including The New York Times Book Review & Vogue. For the last ten years she has developed innovative classroom and enrichment curricula and education technology tools for K12 school networks.



**Julia Steinberg, Co-Lead Instructor**

Julia is a teacher, leader, and curriculum developer who specializes in Humanities. She has 10+ years of teaching experience, working with students from grades six through eight, and led the ELA and Humanities Department at Prospect Schools for over five years. Passionate about reading and storytelling, she spearheaded the creation of a robust reading program and literacy-based instructional practices as a founder at Clinton Hill Middle School. She has worked as a founding curriculum developer for Cadence Learning, which provides innovative models for digital learning experiences.



**Sherwyn Smith, Visiting Instructor**

Sherwyn Smith has over 20 years of teaching experience, from middle school to college. He specializes in helping students tell stories using new media and moving image forms. A member of the middle and high school humanities faculty at the Nightingale-Bamford School for more than two years, Sherwyn has also taught at the Collegiate School and at NYU. His enrichment teaching has focused on the fundamentals of personal essays, short fiction, expository writing, and screenwriting. He was an official Screenwriting Fellow for Walt Disney Studios and has contributed to screenplays on MTV Films, ABC, and Off-Off Broadway.



**Lisa Kapp, Visiting Instructor**

Lisa Kapp is a middle and high school humanities and history teacher at Saint Ann's School. She has a passion for US, World and Art History, and she's a tech enthusiast who is eager to share ideas & resources.



**Andi Wiley, Student Instructor**

Andi is a rising senior at Wesleyan University majoring in Economics and Psychology with a minor in Writing. As a San Francisco Bay Area native, she is passionate about creating a more equitable behavioral health system for the social and emotional well-being of California's youth, which she does through her work with the California Children's Trust. She also plays midfield on Wesleyan's women's soccer team; loves anything fashion-related from thrifting to sewing and altering her own clothes; and enjoys cooking and eating healthy food, which she shares on instagram @happi.healthi.



**Tucker Kirchberger, Student Instructor**

Currently a rising senior at Wesleyan University, Tucker is originally from New Jersey, where he had a background in wrestling. His areas of interest include literature, writing, and music. He is majoring in Philosophy and Environmental Studies.

**Visiting Guest Experts and Core Course Content**

2-3 guest experts will join particular class sessions for interactive interviews with students

**Dr. Orna Guralnik**



**Dr. Orna Guralnik** is a clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst, and writer practicing in New York City. She also stars in the new hit Showtime documentary series “Couples Therapy,” now filming its second season.



[Click here](#) to watch Dr Guralnik’s 2-minute video on how families are coping with the Covid-19 quarantine.

**Xandra Ellin**



**Xandra Ellin** is an associate producer at Pineapple Street and a Per Diem Assistant Producer at WNYC Radio. She is a Wesleyan University graduate with a degree in Psychology and American Studies. Xandra’s career in public radio began at her college radio station, where she was the Public Affairs Director by day and a music DJ by night. She has also produced with CNN, St. Louis Public Radio, and WNPR.

**Vijay Seshadri**



**Vijay Seshadri**, the author of four books of poetry, is poetry editor at The Paris Review and the recipient of the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. He is the Myers Professor of Writing at Sarah Lawrence College.



[Click here](#) to listen to Vijay Seshadri’s NPR Interview on the next generation of poets.

**Core Course Content**

Together, we will explore the writing of and interviews with these public figures.

**Greta Thurnberg**



**Greta Thurnberg**, a 17-year old Swedish environmental activist, has motivated youth activist groups around the world to protest for climate change action.



[Click here](#) to watch Greta Thurnberg’s interview on PBS Newshour.



[Click here](#) to read a profile about Thurnberg’s approach to being interviewed in The New Republic

**Susan Cain**



**Susan Cain** is the author of the bestseller [Quiet: The Power of Introverts in A World That Can’t Stop Talking](#), which was named the #1 best book of the year by Fast Company magazine.



[Click here](#) to watch her record-smashing TED talk, “The Power of Introverts,” which has been viewed over 30 million times.

**Kwame Anthony Appiah**
















**Kwame Anthony Appiah** teaches philosophy at New York University and is the author of “The Ethicist” column for The New York Times. His books include [The Lies that Bind](#) and [The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen](#).



[Click here](#) to read Kwame Anthony Appiah’s New York Times “The Ethicist” column, “Should I Pretend to Love my Stepchildren?”

**Course-at-a-Glance**

<p><b>Content Theme: Your Natural Interview Style</b>  <b>Project Stage: Introduction and Ideation</b></p> <p><i>"I'm on the autism spectrum and I don't usually follow social coding"—Greta Thurnberg</i></p>	
<p> <b>Session 1:</b> Welcome to the Art of the Interview</p>	<p> <b>Session 2:</b> Interview Techniques &amp; Considerations</p>
<p><b>Goal:</b> Get to know your classmates and understand our personality types.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are my personal goals, and who is my community of learners?</li> <li>• What makes a good interview?</li> </ul> <p><b>Want a sneak peak? Check this out:</b></p> <p> <a href="#">Click here</a> to watch featured activist Greta Thurnberg's interview on PBS NewsHour.</p> <p> <a href="#">Click here</a> to listen to a past student's podcast!</p>	<p><b>Goal:</b> Learn interview techniques like body language, pace, and speaking style.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do good interviewers do to make their subjects comfortable and talkative?</li> <li>• What are introverts and extroverts? How do I identify?</li> </ul> <p><b>Want a sneak peak? Check this out:</b></p> <p> <a href="#">Click here</a> to watch this video on vocal branding.</p> <p> <a href="#">Click here</a> to listen to the NPR All Things Considered podcast "Parenting an Extrovert in an Introvert-Centric World."</p>
<p> <b>Digital Deposit:</b> Upload goal setting template and interview questions for interactive interview with Guest Expert</p>	

<p><b>Content Theme: Interview as a Conversation</b>  <b>Project Stage: Vision Board &amp; Project Planning</b></p> <p><i>"Judging people is a whole different business than listening to them...and when you listen to someone, you try to really listen to them in their own language on their own terms." — Dr. Orna Guralnik</i></p>	
<p> <b>Session 3:</b> Interview with Coaching and Guest Expert Interview</p>	<p> <b>Session 4: PBL Guided Workshop 1:</b> Fine-Tuning Our Interview Skills</p>
<p><b>Goal:</b> Develop our listening and empathy skills as interviewers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes a good listener?</li> <li>• How can we make people feel heard and understood?</li> </ul> <p><b>Want a sneak peak? Check this out:</b></p> <p> <a href="#">Click here</a> to listen to Dr. Guralnik's interview "Love in the Time of Corona" on WNYC.</p> <p> <a href="#">Click here</a> to watch a collective interview with Barack Obama.</p>	<p><b>Goal:</b> Develop our interview skills through a practice interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do interview skills look like in action?</li> <li>• What can I learn from interviewing a classmate?</li> </ul> <p><b>Want a sneak peak? Check this out:</b></p> <p> <a href="#">Click here</a> to browse the NPR Podcast Challenge 2020 Finalists and listen to their pieces.</p> <p> <a href="#">Click here</a> to listen &amp; read Vijay Seshadri's interview about his experience winning the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.</p>

**💡 Digital Deposit:** Upload interview project plan and schedule interviews (personal & collaborative)

**Content Theme: The Art of Questioning -- and Listening  
Project Stage: Digital Portfolio**

*"Conversations.... begin with the sort of imaginative engagement you get when you read a novel or watch a movie or attend to a work of art...So, I'm using the word conversation not only for literal talk but also as a metaphor for engagement with the experience and ideas of others"— Kwame Anthony Appiah*

**🎯 Session 5: Question Roadmaps**

**Goal:** Understand different types of questions and learn how to develop a question roadmap

- What is a question roadmap?df
- How can I balance planned vs. spontaneous questions?
- Mid-course survey

**Want a sneak peak? Check this out:**


 [Click here](#) to watch MeshEd students develop and use a question roadmap

**🎯 Session 6: PBL Guided Workshop 2: Collaborative Interview**

**Goal:** Work collaboratively to interview a guest interviewee

- What can I learn from a collaborative interview?
- What are my strengths and areas for growth as an interviewer?
- Review mid-course survey & reset personal goals

**Want a sneak peak? Check this out:**

 [Click here](#) to watch a video about practical tips and tricks to DIY interviewing on Radio Rookies.

**💡 Digital Deposit:** Upload collaborative question roadmap and prepare your personal interview question roadmap

**Content Theme: Crafting a Narrative  
Project Stage: Committing to Project Topic & Plan Development**

*"When you're writing, you're trying to find out something which you don't know. The whole language of writing for me is finding out what you don't want to know, what you don't want to find out. But something forces you to anyway." -James Baldwin*


**🎯 Session 7: Developing a Story Arc in an Interview**

**Goal:** Learn how podcasting pros develop a story arc with an interview

- How can I develop a compelling story arc for my interview?
- What tips and tricks will be useful for my interview?

**Want a sneak peak? Check this out:**

 [Click here](#) to read "Understanding story structure in 4 drawings" on NPR

 [Click here](#) to review Radio scripts and interview road maps, taught by NPR

**🎯 Session 8: PBL Guided Workshop 3: Technical Prep OR Editing Techniques**

**Goal:** Work collaboratively to interview a guest interviewee

- What are the technical preparations needed to create a production space?
- What tools can I use to edit my interview?

**Want a sneak peak? Check this out:**

 [Click here](#) to read "DIY Toolkit: fundamentals of field recording" in *Youth Radio*

**💡 Digital Deposit:** Upload final question roadmap for personal interview project, set up your production space, and record your interview

**Content Theme: Editing and Presentations  
Project Stage: Practice, Pitch, & Present**

*"To me, the job of the artist is to provide a useful and intelligent vocabulary for the world to be able to articulate feelings they experience everyday, and otherwise wouldn't have the means to express in a meaningful and useful way." -Mos Def*

**🎨 Session 9: PBL Guided Workshop 4:**  
Preparing Digital Portfolios & Practicing with Feedback

**Goal:** Prepare digital portfolios and practice presentations

- How can I give a compelling and engaging presentation?
- How can I set up a digital portfolio to document my progress during the Lab?
- What did I learn from the feedback on my practice presentation?

**🎨 Session 10: Project Presentations!**

**Goal:** Present our projects and make plans for the future

- What have I learned about myself from this project?
- What does the rest of my journey look like?
- Final survey

**Want a sneak peak? Check this out:**



[Click here](#) to review the NPR Podcast Challenge Criteria Reviewing

**💡 Digital Deposit:** Upload final digital portfolios and recorded interviews

**About the Brooklyn Action Lab**

Brooklyn Action Lab offers unique project-based learning experiences designed by Meshed, an education collective whose mission is to increase access to high quality project based learning for all adolescents. Learn more about our Lab offerings on our [website](#).