

## Digital Storytelling Overview of Course

The MEPI Alumni Connection promotes community and business leadership among MEPI Leadership Exchange Programs through alumni engagement in 14 countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. It aims to strengthen the network of approximately 2,000 graduates of MEPI programs in order to broaden and deepen the impact they have on their communities. To that end, the program offers tailored in-person and online activities that meet the wide range of its alumni backgrounds, professional interests, and age groups.

### Digital Storytelling Goal

The Digital Storytelling Project aims to leverage the emergence of multiple dynamic communication tools to provide a valuable professional development opportunity for MEPI alumni.

### Digital Storytelling Objectives

After completion of the Digital Storytelling project alumni will have:

- Gained real-life transferrable skills including media production and communication skills to engage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce
- Connected with the growing MEPI alumni community
- Shared MEPI's alumni successes with external audiences

The course will consist of the following components:

**Training:** The MEPI Digital Storyteller is required to participate in a four-month, online training program consisting of four training modules conducted via the IREX online portal Oba ([www.obaverse.net](http://www.obaverse.net)). Fully participating in this training includes attending all virtual courses and submitting all assignments and deliverables to IREX. Participants will be required to submit a deliverable at the conclusion of each module. Failure to fully participate in the training or submit assignments and deliverables in a timely manner will result in the Storyteller being withdrawn from the MEPI Digital Storytelling Project.

**Workplan:** The MEPI Digital Storyteller will develop a workplan in consultation with IREX during the training. The workplan will detail the assignments that the participant is responsible for submitting during the training as well as the capstone projects once they complete the online training program. Assignments may include reporting of MEPI activities, commentary on being a MEPI alumnus/a, feature stories of exemplary alumni, and other topics as approved by IREX. Assignments may be submitted as written articles, videos, or photo essays as approved by IREX.

**Individual Capstones:** The MEPI Digital Storyteller is required to submit a capstone project. The capstone will follow the workplan the Storyteller developed throughout the course of the training program. The capstone may focus on reporting of MEPI activities, commentary on being a MEPI alumnus/a, individual features of exemplary alumni, and other topics as approved by IREX. Capstones may be submitted as written articles, videos, or photo essays as approved by IREX. Capstones may build upon previously submitted assignments from the training program but must demonstrate further development of the original assignments.

**Upon successful completion of the course requirements, MEPI Alumni will earn a certificate from George Mason University.**

## Module 1

### Lesson 1: Introduction to Storytelling

#### Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Know the course requirements and what is expected of them during the course.
- Have begun preparing the workplan that will inform their work over the course of the program.

**Assignment 1:** For this assignment, participants will put together a workplan that includes the project focus, the persons involved (who they will need to contact to successfully complete their project), the location (if travel necessary, the plan for how to get there), the format they plan to use for their story, project activities and estimated time to completion, skills they will learn in the digital storytelling class that they plan to use for their project, and any barriers they might face to implementing their projects.

### Lesson 2: Ethics in Storytelling

#### Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the importance of ethics in storytelling.
- Be able to explain the steps they should take to ensure they are maintaining ethical standards in their storytelling.
- Know the features of an ethical story and how to identify unethical sources.

**Assignment 2:** Review a newspaper article that cites an anonymous source, then answer the following questions: What is the article about? Is this a controversial topic? Why or why not? Why do you think the person wanted to remain anonymous? Are there any named sources? Why would a storyteller use an anonymous source? Does the fact that the person doesn't want to be identified affect the reliability of the information? Do you believe the story?

### Lesson 3: From Idea to Reality: Developing and Capturing a Story

#### Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Practice leadership by taking command of how they tell their story and reflect their values and identities.

- Communicate effectively how they are inspired by their experiences and decide on taking positive action in their respective communities.

**Assignment 3:** Review an article from a magazine and answer the following questions: What was the purpose of the story? Who was benefiting? Did the writer effectively communicate the subject's story? Was there a good balance between facts and personal narrative?

### **Deliverable Week**

During this week, participants will work on their first deliverable which consists of producing a story in written form that includes two representative photographs. Estimated time to complete: 4-5 hours

### **Module 2**

#### **Lesson 4: Using Different Technologies in Storytelling**

#### **Objectives:**

- Understand the difference between a linear and non-linear story.
- Identify how digital content can be used to tell a more effective story (e.g. photographs, videos).
- Understand the difference between media types for storytelling.

### **Deliverable Week**

During this week participants will take the time to produce a photo essay that captures the essence of the story they are seeking to tell. This will include taking, editing, and choosing 15 photos in order to produce a photo essay. Estimated time to complete: 7-10 hours

### **Module 3**

#### **Lesson 5: How to Conduct an Effective Interview**

#### **Objectives**

- Understand the preparation necessary to conduct an effective interview including background research, question development, and format selection.
- Identify techniques to ask effective questions in order to build the story and extract more meaningful information from the interviewee.
- Identify the functions and techniques for the three major components of an interview: the opening, the body, and the closing.

### **Deliverable Week**

During this week, participants will take the time to interview someone, transcribe the interview, and produce an elegant and compelling written story from the interview material. Estimated time to complete: 7-10 hours.

#### Module 4

#### **Lesson 6: Editing Your Story**

##### **Objectives**

- To be able to identify the core elements of the story (the who, what, why, and how).
- Understand techniques for editing written works to create a concise and interesting story.
- Understand techniques for editing videos to create a concise and interesting story.

#### **Lesson 7: Web 2.0 and Utilizing Online Media to Share a Story**

##### **Objectives**

- Recognize the different types of platforms available to effectively share a story.
- Understand key words and the concept of target audiences.
- Practice with various tools and resources so that the narrative can have layers and comprehensive insight.

#### **Capstone Projects Month**

During these four weeks, participants will take the time to work on a story that puts together everything they have learned in this class, including revising their work plan timeline, preparing for an interview, conducting the interview, and leveraging the different multimedia tools at their disposal in order to capture the story they wish to tell.