Great cities contain great stories – and Boston has more than its share. In this course we will excavate some of those stories and craft short documentary films that bring them to life. We will bring a deep-time perspective to these stories by linking places and buildings to comparable remains from one of the great cities of the classical past, either Athens, Rome, or Istanbul (ancient Constantinople). Films will be produced in collaboration with the City of Boston’s Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment, with final versions made available to the city for promotional and instructional projects.

Great cities bring people of disparate backgrounds together. They thrive over centuries, even millennia, thanks to inherent geographic advantages and continuing economic imperatives. In City Stories, we explore how landscapes, buildings, and even objects can stand for moments in time, and how they allow inhabitants to see themselves as players in their city’s history. We combine the power of place and the immediacy of film to connect Boston’s stories with those from other great cities of the past.

In this course you will:
- analyze city monuments and landmarks via form, material, setting, and historical context;
- learn to articulate a range of narratives and messages on the ground and on the screen;
- develop skills for evaluating the impact of a place, and a story, on a range of viewers;
- gain sensitivity to the ways that place catalyzes individual and social identity;
- create digital films that deepen Boston’s story by linking places across time and space.
These skills will allow you to meet **BU Hub Learning Outcomes** for the following four Hub units:

**BU Hub Unit: Research & Information Literacy**
All assignments require research to compile, evaluate, and organize information pertinent to the background, larger context, and meaning of places and people commemorated in Boston, as well as to situate that information in a comparative urban frame from a past city – either Athens, Rome, or Constantinople. Students learn how to organize information topically and visually, and to present it in a way that makes a deeper point. Class discussion and team interaction advance understanding of the ways in which visual media focus interest, distort viewpoint, deepen understanding, and inspire connection.

**BU Hub Unit: Digital/Multimedia Expression**
Students will complete four projects: a short commercial; a blog post; a training video; and a documentary that tells a story. Topics include pre-production including casting, crew needs, storyboarding, and client interviews; on-location cinematography, lighting, and sound capture; and post-production including editing. No prior experience in film production is required. A special camera is not required; students can film with cell-phone cameras if needed.

**BU Hub Unit: Teamwork/Collaboration**
Filmmaking is the ultimate collaborative art; in this course, learning and presentation are team efforts. Each video production team will require students to take on different roles, so as to bring projects from idea-stage to completion. People will work in 2- and 4-person teams to collect information, provide feedback, and create all components of the final products. Two class sessions will be devoted to team discussion of work in progress. For each scaffolded team project students must create time-lines, decide on roles, evaluate storyboard drafts, and come together to create the final product. For more information on effective team building and participation, go here: [http://questromworld.bu.edu/questromteamlearning/main/student-resources/](http://questromworld.bu.edu/questromteamlearning/main/student-resources/)

**BU Hub Unit: Creativity & Innovation**
Creativity is a learnable process. By gaining proficiency with various communicative strategies, considering the intersection of message, audience, and mode, giving and getting feedback, and making repeated trips back to the drawing board, students gain confidence in their own ability to create something new and worthwhile. Consideration of the changing attitudes towards two iconic public Boston spaces – the Bunker Hill Monument and Faneuil Hall – will help students learn how old places have been repeatedly re-imagined. Students work in teams and via scaffolded discussion, reflection, and peer review which encourages them to experiment, take risks, and create something new of their own.

**The Cross-College Challenge (XCC)**
The Cross-College Challenge (XCC) offers a unique project-based learning experience in which interdisciplinary student teams from across BU’s undergraduate colleges tackle real-world problems and develop leadership, teamwork, and communication skills. Led by 2 faculty members from different disciplines, students from different schools and majors will be assigned to a project team where they will conduct significant research and address a current challenge. In collaboration with both on- and-off campus partners, student teams work on issues that impact our communities in areas such as the arts, management, technology, entrepreneurship, and sustainability, or explore enduring human questions such as inequality, social justice or human creativity.
For this course, our community partner is the City of Boston Mayor’s Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment (https://www.boston.gov/departments/tourism-sports-and-entertainment). Contact: Renee Kackley, Senior Communications Manager.

REQUIRED BOOKS/RESOURCES:


Adobe Creative Cloud (free for BU students!): https://www.bu.edu/tech/services/teaching/digital-multimedia-production/adobe-creative-cloud/

RECOMMENDED:

RESOURCES:
The Athenian Agora Excavations: http://www.agathe.gr


The library guide for XC420 is https://library.bu.edu/citystories. Here you will find links to a wide range of map, data record, and image resources for the City of Boston (our thanks to Chris Smith, Mugar Library’s Librarian for Anthropology, Sociology and Philosophy!).

RULES & EXPECTATIONS
Attendance and punctuality. This class relies on full participation of all students. Two unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your final grade by one full letter grade (e.g., B+ to C+). Three or more unexcused absences will result in failure to pass the course.

Emergency absences and late arrivals should be phoned or texted before the class meeting. ALWAYS NOTIFY, even about a projected late arrival to class.

Academic Conduct: Students are expected to read and comply with Boston University’s Universal Academic Conduct Code for Undergraduate Students: http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/

Plagiarism: The presentation of another’s work as your own, even by mistake, is a violation of BU’s Academic Conduct Code. Plagiarism may result in failing this course and possible additional penalties.
**Teamwork:** No team member shall intentionally restrict or inhibit another team member’s access to team meetings, teamwork-in-progress, or other team activities without the express authorization of the instructor. All team members shall be held responsible for the content of all teamwork submitted for evaluation as if each team member had individually submitted the entire work product of their team as their own work.

**Recording:** Classroom proceedings for this course may be recorded for purposes including, but not limited to, student illness, religious holidays, disability accommodations, or student course review. Students may not use a recording device in the classroom except with the instructor’s permission.

**Laptops:** Use of laptops and other digital devices are permitted.

**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**
There are three graded assignments: an individual postcard (short written essay with image; 10%); a short video story, done with a partner (20% in toto); and a 10-minute video, done with a team of four (50% in toto). There is also an un-graded 30-second commercial, to provide low-stakes practice with filming and technology. Any earlier assignment may be used as fodder for any subsequent assignment. Both video assignments are scaffolded multi-week projects, with team members working through preliminary training with opportunities for discussion and feedback. Several class sessions require advance reading with in-class discussion, brainstorming, and critique, intended to help guide and inspire individual and teamwork. Class participation and effective teamwork are essential, as is a final reflection (20%). Details below:

- **Partner/Team Contracts (DME, TC) (Not graded) – due 9/10, 9/24, 10/15 and 10/29**
  Following a presentation from two XCC Teaming Fellows from the Center for Team Learning on the purpose and specific sections of the team contract, students will be assigned partners and teams. In-class time will be devoted to drafting specific goals, roles/responsibilities, processes and interactions, and a preliminary project schedule. Contracts may be updated and adapted throughout the semester as teams work on their projects and track their progress.

- **Individual Postcard (CI, RIL) – 10% – due 10/1**
  The postcard should comprise an image – of a view, building, space, or object – from one of the cities we are considering (Boston, Athens, Rome, or Istanbul), along with a concise but pithy essay (maximum 300 words). Your essay should have a point and a point of view; this need not be your own (although it can be). Your aim should be to conjoin image and words to reveal something larger – about social identities or priorities, historical moments or parameters, shifts of thought or perspective. The goal is to deploy something visual in service of an underlying idea.

- **Partner Short Video Story (CI, DME, RIL, TC) – 30% – due 9/24, 10/1, and 10/22**
  The video story should be 5-8 minutes long, and focus on a single important place from one of the cities we are considering (Boston, Athens, Rome, or Istanbul), and provide a vivid angle of engagement with it. The components of this project include a 1-page preliminary description (10%), 2-page annotated bibliography (10%), and the final minute video (10%).

- **Team Video Project (CI, DME, RIL, TC) – 40% – due 10/29 and onward**
  1. Pre-production. This phase includes the following steps and activities: scripting; storyboarding; scheduling; and staging. These will be measured via two team deliverables:
- **Description and Proposal (10%).** The project description should offer a clear idea and compelling rationale (maximum 1 page). The project proposal should build on that description by presenting all specific points to be made, with appropriate suggested accompanying visuals (maximum 5 pages). Proposals will be reviewed by faculty; revisions will be reviewed by City of Boston Mayor’s Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment.

- **Preliminary Annotated Bibliography (10%).** Each team member should take responsibility for one specific aspect of research for the overall project and produce an annotated bibliography for review by team members. A comprehensive revised bibliography should be submitted as a team assignment.

2. **Production.** This step includes the actual filming and sound recording.

3. **Post-production.** This phase includes the following steps and activities: reviewing; editing; captioning; exporting; seeking and giving feedback; and final editing. This phase will be assessed by the presentation of your final team video. (20%) 

- **Class and team participation (CI, DME, RIL, TC) – 10%**

- **Reflection on Lessons Learned (CI, DME, RIL, TC) (10%)**
  Short form plus written assessment of student’s own roles in project development and execution, with focus on skills gained in digital/multimedia expression, research, creativity, and teamwork.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

9/3: **Bunker Hill – battle, memorial, afterlife**

**THIS CLASS WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT. CLASS WILL BEGIN THERE AT 11:30. MEET AT THE MONUMENT AT 11:30 OR AT HAR 302 AT 11:15; WE WILL TAKE LYFTS.**

If it’s raining, we’ll meet in the classroom (HAR 302).

9/10: **Presentation from the Center for Team Learning + Workshop on Adobe Premiere**
- Discuss and create preliminary partner contracts for 5-minute video story
- GUEST SPEAKERS: Gabriella Hakim and Katherine Leon-Molina, XCC Teaming Fellows

9/17: **Faneuil Hall & the Athenian Agora: re-making public places and their users**
The Atlas of Boston History pertinent to early Boston (esp. in Section III: A Provincial City in the British Empire and Section IV: From Town to City Government).

GUEST SPEAKERS:
- Joe Bagley, City Archaeologist, City of Boston. Joe will summarize how to use some essential resources for research on Boston’s buildings, monuments, public spaces, etc.
- J. Christina Smith, Anthropology, Sociology & Philosophy Librarian, Boston University Libraries (jchris@bu.edu). Chris is our library contact, and is the go-to person for questions regarding access to research resources for this course.

9/24: Capturing sound & video, including lighting
- GUEST LECTURERS: Kristina Vicario and Guruamar Khalsa, Digital Storyteller, Digital Team, Department of Innovation and Technology, boston.gov/digital
- DUE: Updated partner contracts for 5-minute video stories + 1-page preliminary descriptions

10/1: B-roll, adding music, making your video sing, editing workshop
- DUE: Boston “postcard” + 2-page annotated bibliography for 5-minute video stories

10/8: Presentation of 30-second commercials + on-location filming

10/15: Tourism, ancient & modern (Andrea)/Creating documentaries (Tom)
- Discuss and create preliminary contracts for Team Video Projects

10/22: Looking & Feeling: People in stone, then & now
- DISCUSS ON SITE: The Boston Women’s Memorial
- DUE: 5-minute video stories

10/29: Center for Team Learning/Why the Past?
- DUE: Updated team contracts for 10-minute video
- GUEST SPEAKERS: Gabriella Hakim and Katherine Leon-Molina, XCC Teaming Fellows

11/5: Team storyboard work & discussion
11/12: Editing workshop: rough cut due

11/19: Watch, discuss, assess
Together we will watch four short videos of a similar character to those you are engaged in creating, one each for the four cities we are focusing on. Then you will move into small groups to critically assess these videos. What works well, and why? What lessons do you take away?

12/3: Presentations to class and City of Boston, Department of Tourism, City Archaeologist, Department of Innovation and Technology, and Mayor’s Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment

12/10: Wrap-up/Final Reflections

**XCC Showcase: Saturday, Dec. 11, 9 am, Metcalf Ballroom**
The XCC Showcase is the final, public presentation of team project work. It is required of all XCC participants. It is open to the public and to the entire BU community.