

Visual Storytelling in Mongolia

June 8-12, 2020



This course is offered as a 5-day course in Ulaanbaatar (with one overnight near UB) to be taught the week before the regular June Field School session. Students can take this course as a stand-alone offering or attend this course prior to participation in a regular Mongolia Field School course.

Course Instructor:

Peter J. Bittner, Freelance Multimedia Journalist, Lecturer at UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, peterbittner.com; peter.bittner@berkeley.edu

Course Overview

This 5-day course will include training on journalistic and documentary multimedia storytelling. It is offered as both a stand-alone course or as a pre-course before taking another Mongolia Field School course. The course will allow participants to gain new skills across multiple media formats, including journalism, video, photography podcasts and other forms of storytelling. Those who complete the course will be able to confidently document their travels and experiences in Mongolia and beyond with style, efficiency and in a culturally-sensitive manner. While the focus is on media techniques, the course will also help participants develop an understanding of key aspects of Mongolia's urban and peri-urban culture and lifestyles. Participants will have the opportunity to hone their storytelling abilities through skills-based "assignments" and will leave the program with high-quality multimedia products.

This course will cover techniques including journalistic narrative writing, documentary photography, video journalism, podcasting and audio journalism, aerial videography, 360/VR video and interactive online narratives. The goal will be to introduce participants to a wide variety of multimedia storytelling tools and allow students to apply them in small group-exercises on-site in Ulaanbaatar and surrounding countryside natural areas. Students will be required to bring their own media equipment, but some (including drones and 360 cameras) will be provided for a small number of activities. A list of suggested media gear will be provided to participants before the course, with an emphasis on low-budget but high-quality production capabilities.

The 5-day intensive multimedia boot camp will be based in Ulaanbaatar, with field trips within the capital and to nearby cultural sites, including monasteries and herding camps. Due to the importance of capturing visuals during the "golden hour", this course will involve occasional meetings around dawn or dusk.

Participants will work together in partner pairs or triads to co-produce stories which can serve as both products of their learning and memorable souvenirs from the course and visiting Mongolia. Participants will have the opportunity to apply their skills during other Field School courses, and to

present their media projects to audiences through the ACMS. For those who attend another ACMS Field School course, the instructor will be willing to continue to work with students as an advisor.

The course tuition for this course covers the teaching aspects of the course and one overnight excursion, however participants are responsible for their own housing and meals during the portions of the course in Ulaanbaatar.

Anticipated Course Activities:

Day 1: Monday, June 8th – Course Introduction, Photography Workshop – Ganden Monastery Excursion

Day 2: Tuesday, June 9th – Narrative Writing, Podcasting Workshops – Zaisan Monument Excursion

Day 3: Wednesday, June 10th – Video Storytelling Workshop – Ger Area Excursion

Day 4: Thursday, June 11th – Drone, 360 Storytelling, Night Photography – Overnight Trip to National Park or Natural Area near Ulaanbaatar

Day 5: Friday, June 12th – Back to Ulaanbaatar, Editing, Final Show and Tell

Disclaimer: The above course schedule is subject to change based on local conditions including weather forecasts, availability of interviewees, etc.

About the Instructor:



Peter Bittner is a multimedia journalist based in Mongolia and a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. Peter's journalistic work has appeared in the New York Times, CNN, Bloomberg, Reuters, Al Jazeera, Vice, and other major outlets. Peter produces content for a wide variety of commercial clients including the United Nations, the Canadian government, and textile and apparel companies. Peter has consulted in public relations for major international brands, conducted videography on arctic expeditions, and founded non-profit programs in Asia and the United States. Peter holds a BA in International Political Economy from the University of Puget Sound and a Masters' of Journalism in New Media from UC, Berkeley.