

Multimedia Reporting

JOU 3346L, section 1916, fall 2018

11:45 a.m. to 12:35 p.m., Weimer 1070 (lecture) and 4:05 to 7:05 p.m., Weimer 3024 (lab), Wednesdays

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Office Hours: 2 to 4 p.m., Mondays; 1:30 to 3 p.m., Wednesdays, and by appointment

Course Summary

This three-credit intermediate journalism course marries traditional local news reporting with the multimedia skills required of reporters today. Multimedia is a broad term. For this class, it means using more than one kind of storytelling tool to tell a story: text, images, audio, video, data, etc.

Our goal is to learn to identify, pitch, produce and deliver a local news story to an online audience. We will conduct ourselves as if reporting for a news website. Given the community-based story opportunities, this course will help prepare you for not only advance journalism courses in the College of Journalism and Communications, but also an internship and or a job before or after graduation.

Course Objectives

Students in this course will learn and or understand the basics of:

1. Achieving greater clarity, consistency, accuracy and authority in their newswriting and attribution.
2. Identifying and pitching a local news story (government, education, business, public safety, etc.).
3. Finding news in the community using official and unofficial sources as well as other means.
4. Gathering information via interviews, public documents, Google, online repositories, etc.
5. Determining which storytelling tool best suits a particular story and maximizing the opportunity.
6. Developing a “hire me” digital portfolio and sharing one’s work to as broad an audience as possible.

Noteworthy

Each student is responsible for:

1. Reading, understanding and abiding by this syllabus and its contents and directives.
2. Abiding by any announcements or directives the instructor sends to the class via University of Florida email, or our course Canvas or Slack platforms.
3. Completing all assigned readings as related quizzes and class participation will affect grading.

Required Texts

- “Field Guide to Covering Local News: How to Report on Cops, Courts, Schools, Emergencies and Government,” Bayles © 2012.
- “The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law” apstylebook.com and [#apstylechat](https://twitter.com/apstylechat).
 - access free via <https://www.apstylebook.com/smathers-libraries-at-the-university-of-florida>
- “Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism (3rd Ed.),” Tim Harrower © 2013.
- WUFT.org; Gainesville Sun and gainesville.com (UF subscription to Access World News database)

Other Reading

- Journalism websites, including, but not limited to those of national, regional, local, alternative and campus news outlets – newspapers, magazines, television and radio and online-only.
- “Aim for the Heart: Write, Shoot, Report and Produce for TV and Multimedia,” Tompkins © 2018.
- “Writing & Reporting for the Media,” 11th edition, Bender, Davenport, Drager and Fedler © 2016.
- “Online Journalism Handbook: Skills to Survive and Thrive in the Digital Age,” Bradshaw © 2018.
- “Mobile and Social Media Journalism: A Practical Guide,” Adornato © 2018.
- Style guides on grammar, spelling, punctuation, special interest, etc., including but not only:
 - “A Style Guide for News Writers & Editors,” Bender, Davenport, Drager and Fedler © 2016.
- Other materials provided via email from the instructor and or via our space on Canvas or Slack.

Students With Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with disabilities and who have registered with the UF Dean of Students Office. This office will provide relative documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodations.

UF Disability Resource Center: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Counseling Center

Personal or health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress, career uncertainty and or relationships can interfere with your ability to function as a student. UF’s Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) offers support for students in need. CWC is located at 3190 Radio Road and open each weekday from 8 to 5.

UF Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>

Resources

The University of Florida offers an abundance of resources that can help students throughout their academic career. Each student is encouraged to make use of these resources, which include but are not limited to the library, tutoring, career resource center, etc.

UF Student Resources: <http://ufadvising.ufl.edu/student-resources.aspx>

Attendance, Attention, Deadlines, Extra Credit

Attendance and Lateness

Students are to show respect for one another and for the instructor. Those who come to class each session and on time will be rewarded. Each absence will result in a 10-point penalty toward the class participation portion of your grade (see page 9 of this syllabus). Lateness or unwarranted disruptions may likewise result in up to a 5-point penalty, per each occasion. Students absent from or late to lab are responsible for learning about any missed material by consulting another student, or visiting the instructor during office hours. Such matters shall not be handled via email. Which brings us to ...

Life Happens

Students have been known to miss class because of temporary illness, oversleeping, travel, hangovers, job interviews, family matters, mental health, etc. Some of these excuses may be legitimate and others not. An absence is an absence and this instructor's policy is to simply note that the student missed class. Regardless of the reasons for being absent, a student who misses too many classes risks not mastering the coursework. In such a case, he or she may be withdrawn from the course per UF policy.

UF Attendance Policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Mobile Devices

Mobile devices must be out of sight and unused during class unless the instructor directs them to be used for class purposes. Do not check text messages, social media, email, etc., during class, as this is rude. Give your full and undivided attention to anyone who is speaking in class, including your classmates. Anyone seen checking social media or any other sites unrelated to the immediate topics discussed in class may incur penalties ranging from a warning (first offense) to grade deduction.

Deadlines

Late assignments are not accepted unless an emergency can be documented. This means that an assignment submitted late is graded as a zero. If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, advance notice and written documentation are required. If advance notice is not possible because of a true emergency, written documentation will be mandated ASAP.

Generally speaking, we will function as if working in a professional workplace. In the real world, you don't show up for work (on time) or don't do your work (on time) you risk losing your job. In other words, students who don't come to class and or miss deadlines will suffer consequences.

Extra Credit

No work for "extra credit" shall be accepted.

Each student is expected to do the same amount of work (and to improve progressively) and achieve the same outcomes (including getting published). This proves to be fair when considering that students have different circumstances unrelated to class. Those students, for example, who must work three jobs don't have as much time to do extra credit as those who don't have to work. The instructor will not grade according to effort as it's the outcome that matters. He will, however, be mindful of whether a student's work is trending forward or backward when the time comes for midterm or final grades.

Academic Integrity

The College of Journalism and Communications is committed to upholding the university's academic honor code. Academic dishonesty of any kind shall not be tolerated in this course. The university's guidelines provide additional details, which each student is expected to understand. To be certain, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to using any work done by another person and submitting it for a class assignment; submitting work done for another class; copying and pasting text written by another person without quotation marks and or without complete attribution, which usually includes a link to the original work; using images produced by someone else without explicit permission by the creator. Attribution is not the same as permission. Most images found online are not free to use.

UF Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>

Sources, Diversity and Conflicts of Interest

Whenever possible during this course, students shall pursue storytelling that is fair, accurate and complete and based on information gathered from a variety of sources. A greater understanding of the cultural and ethnic differences in our society will enhance the learning experience, and help students develop habits and sensitivities that will be of great value in their workplaces and communities.

This emphasis on diversity of sources shall not focus just on race and ethnicity or sexual orientation, but also age, education, gender, geography, occupation, politics, religion, socioeconomics, etc.

Abide related content "Diversity in News Coverage," pages 88-89 in course textbook by Harrower.

Avoid conflicts of interest at all times. Students in this course shall not be used as sources for your field assignments. The same applies to relatives, roommates, friends (from campus or back home), sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, or members of any other co-curricular or extracurricular organizations to which you belong. Interviewing UF faculty, staff, or employees may be allowed provided they and the student do not have a prior relationship and only with prior approval from the instructor.

Sources must be interviewed either in person or on the phone. Email interviews are discouraged and permitted only with the instructor's permission in advance of the particular interview. Sometimes a source will want you to let him read a story before it's submitted or published. Do not do so. It may be appropriate sometimes, depending on the story, even ideal to call the source back to confirm facts or context, or even to read the person's direct or direct quotes to him or her. Be wary, however, of allowing someone else to determine or undermine your reporting or story approach for nefarious reasons.

In nearly all cases, multiple sourcing is required and be sources we mean interacting with at least two real human beings, and not simply relying on organizational statements, news releases or websites. This also involves contacting as many people or obtaining as much related documentation as possible. It is wise to interview as many sources as possible, so you have more than you need for your story.

All facts and opinions in your story must be attributed to sources. Anonymous or off-the-record material is not acceptable any more than the use of fictional people. If there's a compelling reason to not use a source's full name in a story, it must be explained to the instructor in advance for approval.

Submitted assignments not abiding these sourcing, diversity and interview mandates shall be penalized.

Course Representation

In dealing with news sources and others in the community for course assignments, you may be asked, “Who are you with?” or “Why are you asking?” or “Who are you writing this for?” Say that you are enrolled in a reporting course at the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida. Do not imply that you work for any media on campus or otherwise unless so directed by the instructor. Work for this course potentially may be published by a news organization, but will be public via your course blog and website. You may refer a source’s questions and concerns to your instructor.

Class assignments shall not be posted elsewhere on the Internet, or shared with a potential employer as examples of your writing or reporting ability, without prior approval of the instructor. Sharing material that has been substantially edited by an instructor as your own work could be considered dishonest.

Professional Standards

This course will benefit anyone interested in a career in any communications field, because he or she must be able to write clear and concise copy, with care and precision, often on deadline, and that is fair and accurate. One major American daily newspaper defines the skills it expects of its reporters this way:

Writing ability grammar and spelling; ability to tell a good story well; use of quotes, anecdotes and descriptive detail; use of active voice and strong verbs; ability to write inviting leads that hit the point of the story; ability to write tightly and to organize information in logical, compelling sequence.

Reporting ability pursuit, digging, enterprise, diligence; able and eager to see and pursue promising angles; able to seek and obtain anecdotes, details and quotations that provide documentation and add liveliness to copy; able to see need for and to get both sides of the story; able to cultivate good sources.

Speed, productivity and efficiency speed on deadline; speed and efficiency in completing non-deadline assignments; ability and willingness to manage more than one assignment at a time; ability and willingness to make frequent, substantive contributions to the content of the paper.

Accuracy skill with basic factual information such as names, addresses, dates and figures; ability to identify and make use of the best sources, whether they are documents, references or people.

Work habits punctuality, reliability, readiness to go beyond the minimum requirements of the job; interest in assuming and ability to assume more than minimum responsibility; ability and willingness to anticipate and fulfill the demands of an assignment without prompting; ability to deal even-handedly with peers and supervisors, to accept constructive criticism and to offer constructive suggestions; interest in all areas of the news operation; knowledge of community, regional, national and international events; regular and thorough reading of the newspaper.

Judgment commitment to fairness and balance; ability to recognize and assess possible adverse consequences of actions; knowledge of, respect for and observance of the news department's policies.

Potential likelihood that the reporter is a candidate for a more challenging reporting assignment or a supervisory position; evidence that he or she possesses the characteristics of leadership and supervisory ability expected of supervising editors.

Social Media

Social media is now an essential aspect of efforts on many storytelling fronts to gather and present information, report and filter the news, and distribute content across multiple platforms. In this course, we may attempt to use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Medium, LinkedIn and other social media for reporting, and to communicate with one another and people we may never meet. We will also use these tools to better present ourselves and demonstrate our value to potential employers.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the final weeks of the semester. Students will be given specific dates when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Associated Press Style

Cannot stress this enough. Helpful hints: capitalization, numerals, dates, decades, years, Roman and Arabic numerals, percent, percentages, a.m., p.m., times, ages, boy, girl, infant, youth, directions and regions, highway designations, composition titles, magazine names, newspaper names, titles, military titles, courtesy titles, legislative titles, religious titles, academic, abbreviations and acronyms, second reference, social media, state, state names, abbreviation of state names with cities, datelines, dateline cities, distances, percents, dimensions, foot, cents, dollars, millions, fractions, addresses, etc.

Field Assignments

All writing assignments should be turned in:

- On white paper, with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left, right) and 12-point Times Roman font.
- With the file named as either lastname_storyslug.doc or lastname_storyslug.docx.
- With your name, slug (approved by the instructor) and date, all single-spaced in the top left corner.
- With the text in single-spaced, block format (no indented paragraphs; single spaces between them).
- With quotes typically as their own paragraphs.
- All field assignments must be submitted or posted by the specified deadline.
- Keep electronic copies of all assignments. Email a copy of each in-class one once completed along with your notes to yourself. Don't get caught having to say your only copy is on the lab computer.
- Failure to abide by these expectations could result in grade penalties.

Budget Lines

Budget lines are a staple of any newsroom (see Harrower, pages 18-19). They enable writers and editors to detail what content is proposed or publishable and why, most importantly, the audience should care. Budget lines typically focus on impact, immediacy, proximity, prominence, characters, novelty, conflict, emotions, etc. Therefore, a budget line must be submitted for each field assignment via the form at <http://bit.ly/loweclasspitch>. Not doing so on time and as instructed may result in a grade penalty.

WUFT News

This course is aligned significantly with WUFT and its aligned websites. These are not campus stations. They are professional news outlets serving 19 counties in north central Florida. So for this class, think and act like a professional journalist. In other words, treat this like a job or internship. If you do, you will get better clips, you will better prepare yourself for a job and you'll get a better grade. It also prepares you for working in a professional workplace by navigating office politics, communicating your ideas, garnering attention and interacting with management. Even if a job in journalism is not your desired destination, you'll gain valuable work experience to apply toward your chosen profession.

Most details about how to function for WUFT – from finding stories to writing headlines – are on the WUFT News intranet (<http://www.wuft.org/newsroom>). The username and password are both *newsroom*.

There is no required equipment or software for this course, other than most likely a smartphone and what's taught in the college's Sight, Sound and Motion course.

Slack

All students in the three JOU 3446L sections shall pitch their story ideas via <http://bit.ly/loweclasspitch> no later than the night before his or her lab. All pitches will automatically load into a daily story budget (Google Doc) as well as be shared via a shared Slack channel. Feedback for your idea will come from your lab instructor and other instructors via Slack. You MUST monitor these forms and channels.

Story Submission

- All text stories and associated story assets (photographs, video or audio files, data visualizations, etc.) considered ready for publishing must be submitted to the instructor, who would then process it according to WUFT mandates. Students shall not move stories or assets to another WUFT editor for publishing unless expressly directed to do so to by his or her instructor.
- Your story submission must also include an appropriate headline, two tweets and social media post.

Always remember: All field and blogging assignments will be placed onto your digital portfolio and in Canvas, regardless of external publishing. Your submission to Canvas is for a grade. Failure to submit to that platform by the deadline will result in, at best, a point reduction, and in most cases, zero credit.

Grading (Part I)

The instructor will judge each assignment as an newsroom editor focused on accuracy, craftsmanship, effort and enterprise, not to mention how well the student reporter abides directives, instruction and feedback. Other considerations: relevancy or urgency (front-page news or just a brief); the quality of sourcing; the depth of interviewing; attribution; the power of quotes; story flow (is it logical); adherence to AP style, not to mention grammar, spelling and punctuation; and gumption and ingenuity.

An A indicates superior performance; B, highly competent, above-average work; C, average; D, below average; E, unsatisfactory. Use and manage your time efficiently. You will be rewarded for results, not simply for effort. Steady improvement, however, will earn additional equity.

Final grade calculations: 930-1,000, A; 929-900, A-; 899-870, B+; 869-830, B; 829-800, B-; 799-770, C+; 769-730, C; 729-700, C-; 699-670, D+; 669-630, D; 629-600 D-; 599 and below, E.

Field Assignment Rubric

TEXT (50 points)

- Lead: Generally looking for an anecdotal lead – a revealing little story that lures the reader in.
- Nut graph: Why does this person, activity, agency, etc., matters now; otherwise helps the reader know why this is a story worth reading. A supporting nut graph may be ideal.
- Chronology/What lies ahead: Efficient use – and definitely not overuse – of background information. Provides context. Moves the story forward. Doesn't slow it down.
- Transitions: Do they help move the story along, give it life and urgency and context.
- Quotations/Attribution: Is it clear who's saying what, where and when and why?
- Prescription: Does the story fall within the expected length given the assignment?

SOURCING (5 points): Is everyone who should be included? Do they in total provide sufficient depth (information and insight), context (broadening understanding) and reliability? Are there enough sources to lessen the chance for bias and inaccuracy? Is demographic diversity factored?

MECHANICS (10 points): Avoids errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation or AP style, not to mention wordiness and undue repetition or redundancies, prepositional traps and run-on sentences; no form errors or obvious layout concerns based on class instruction; demonstrates quality proofreading.

IMAGE(S) (10 points)

Is/are the image(s) taken by the reporter? (Courtesy ones only OK if contextualizing someone's past.) Do they demonstrate basic competencies such as exposure, focus and composition (framing, rule of thirds)? Are they cropped 4x6 or 2x3 horizontally, and ordered in such a way to represent an obvious story, with a variety of shots (tight, wide, super tight, medium, point of view, etc.)? Are the captions sufficient in length and abiding grammar, spelling, punctuation, AP style, etc.? Is the SoundCloud image a portrait?

MULTIMEDIA (15 points)

- Audio or video: Can we readily discern who did what? Is the narrator sufficiently introduced? Is the mic close enough to his or her mouth? Is there an apparent nut graph? Does the story convey emotion, motion, a central character, tension, shock and awe, and or intimacy? Does it aim for the heart? Does its tone match the assignment? Is it fair, accurate, interesting, thorough and human? Is there appropriate natural sound, and placed at points in the story that make sense? Is the sound clean and get you close to the action, and without undue (background) noise? Obvious instances of poor editing (hard/jump cuts, missing room tone, drop offs, etc.)?
- Data visualization: In cases in which audio or video is not possible, is there a creative or alternative way in which the audience can access additional information, and the reporter can demonstrate adding to his or her journalistic toolbox?

PRESENTATION (10 points)

Is the package properly executed on your digital portfolio – including on a hidden webpage named according to class instruction; with an anchor multimedia element; with a headline (with a subject and verb) and byline above the story? Is the audio/video element properly embedded?

FACTUAL ERRORS (up to minus 50 points):

- Factual errors are embarrassing and intolerable. They can range from an inaccurate street address or time element (even if the effect on the story is relatively insignificant) to a misspelled name of a person, business, agency or institution (on any reference), to a misquote; or just plain inaccuracy.

Grading (Part II)

Lecture Participation (10 percent)

- Be prepared to discuss assigned class readings and current events when called upon.
- Each lecture absence shall result in a 10-point penalty toward this participation grade. Being late or causing unwarranted disruptions shall result in up to a five-point penalty per each occasion.
- Each student must produce by 11:59 p.m. each Wednesday at least one tweet using the #loweclass hashtag about something learned, witnessed or experienced during our lecture time together.

Lab Participation (10 percent)

- A key aspect of journalism is knowing that in most cases your work will be evaluated first by editors and colleagues. Be prepared to offer feedback on each other's ideas and work in lab.
- In addition to extending lessons introduced during lecture, our lab sessions will primarily focus on working collectively to help each other identify, pitch and develop the best story packages possible.
- Each student must produce by 11:59 p.m. each lab day at least one tweet using the #loweclass hashtag about something learned, witnessed or experienced during our lab time together.
- Each lab absence will result in a 10-point penalty toward this participation grade. Lateness or unwarranted disruptions may result in up to a five-point penalty per each occasion.

Quizzes (10 percent)

- Expect weekly quizzes related to assigned readings, lecture discussions and or current events.
- Expect weekly quizzes to assess learning of The Associated Press Stylebook and what's at #apstyle.

Digital Portfolio (10 percent)

- Each student must develop and or maintain a "hire me" website otherwise known as a digital portfolio for this course as a means of presenting his or her work to the world. This website will include, but not be limited to, a home page, an "about me" page, a portrait, a blog and coursework.
- Each student shall submit assigned and regular blog posts that shall serve as a learning journal.

Field Assignments (40 percent)

- Each student will identify, pitch, report and produce several multimedia packages during the course according to prescribed types, lengths, objectives, etc. that aim to determine the level of proficiency to which he or she has learned the concepts taught in the course to date.

Special Report (20 percent)

- Each student will identify, pitch, report and produce a multimedia package according to prescribed types, lengths, objectives, etc. that amounts to a special report, and which aims to determine the level to which he or she has learned the concepts taught in the course to date.
- All students within the three JOU 3346L labs must submit their respective special reports by Dec. 5.

Missing or Late Work

- Assignments, mandates, quizzes, etc., not completed or submitted on time and as instructed shall be penalized significantly. Again, in the real world, you don't do your work and on time you risk losing your job (see page 3). In #loweclass, you shall be rewarded with a grade of zero.

Lab Schedule

This syllabus represents our current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, these plans may change based on developing news or learning opportunities. Such changes shall be communicated in class, via email, Canvas or Slack. Another consideration: The unplanned availability of guest speakers who would enhance our experience. The course will begin as a bootcamp, in which students learn the basics of local news reporting, and evolve from weekly to biweekly multimedia reporting assignments. A blog post (added to your digital portfolio) is due weekly. Plan to work on more than one story at a time.

WEEK ONE: Lowe, Aug. 22 and Magoc, Aug. 23

- Introductions; mission and goals; using social media for reporting; developing an online presence.

WEEK TWO: Hernandez, Aug. 27; Lowe, Aug. 29 and Magoc, Aug. 30

- Newswriting 101; identifying and pitching a local story; augmenting stories with photos and data.

WEEK THREE: No labs – substituting required individual meetings with your respective instructor.

- First field assignment due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Sept. 7.

WEEK FOUR: Hernandez, Sept. 10; Lowe, Sept. 12 and Magoc, Sept. 13

- Covering local, county and state government – and doing it as a reporter on a daily assignment.

WEEK FIVE: Hernandez, Sept. 17; Lowe, Sept. 19 and Magoc, Sept. 20

- Covering public safety (crime, courts, cops) and public health – stories involving people with badges.
- Second field assignment due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Sept. 21

WEEK SIX: Hernandez, Sept. 24; Lowe, Sept. 26 and Magoc, Sept. 27

- Covering education and schools.

WEEK SEVEN: Hernandez, Oct. 1; Lowe, Oct. 3 and Magoc, Oct. 4

- Covering federal, state, county, municipal and school board elections.
- Third field assignment due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Oct. 5

WEEK EIGHT: No labs – substituting required individual meetings with respective instructor

- Final revisions on first, second and third field assignments due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Oct. 12.

WEEK NINE: Hernandez, Oct. 15; Lowe, Oct. 17 and Magoc, Oct. 18

- Introduction to reporting with audio.

WEEK TEN: Hernandez, Oct. 22; Lowe, Oct. 24 and Magoc, Oct. 25

- Covering business and economic development.
- Fourth field assignment due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Oct. 26.

WEEK ELEVEN: Hernandez, Oct. 29; Lowe, Oct. 31 and Magoc, Nov. 1

- Introduction to reporting with (smartphone) video.

WEEK TWELVE: Hernandez, Nov. 5; Lowe, Nov. 7 and Magoc, Nov. 8

- More on reporting from the community – and not forgetting that voters are going to the polls.
- Fifth field assignment due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Nov. 9.

WEEK THIRTEEN: Hernandez, Nov. 12; Lowe, Nov. 14 and Magoc, Nov. 15

- TBA

WEEK FOURTEEN: Hernandez, Nov. 19; Thanksgiving Week

- One or more of the instructors will be available for consultation as much as possible Nov. 19 and 20.
- Sixth field assignment due by 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 20.

WEEK FIFTEEN: Hernandez, Nov. 26; Lowe, Nov. 28 and Magoc, Nov. 29

- News meeting, editing consultations and progressing toward reporting and crafting a special report.
- Final revisions on fourth, fifth and sixth field assignments due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Nov. 30.

WEEK SIXTEEN: Hernandez, Dec. 3 and Lowe, Dec. 5

- Special reports due by 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 5. Final revisions due by Wednesday, Dec. 12.