

# JOU4930 – Innovative Storytelling/Media Product Design

Fall 2018 | Weimer 3324

**Instructor:** Matt Sheehan, Director of Stories and Emerging Platforms

**Office:** 3040B Weimer

**Email:** [msheehan@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:msheehan@jou.ufl.edu)

**Phone:** 352.354.3629

**Office Hours:** Mondays 2-4 p.m., prior to class. You may also check and book other times here: <https://calendly.com/sheehan-matt>

## **Our Objective This Semester**

In this class, we're going to throw everything about your conceptions – and what you've probably been taught what was a good piece of journalism – out the window. We're going to stretch ideas of what a “news” story is and what journalism could be. We're going to be looking at storytelling from the user's perspective, not the creator's.

This course will challenge you to conceptualize and execute high-level reporting/storytelling at your self-direction, be collaborative with other students and be looking for entrepreneurial or innovative coverage. Consider it the equivalent of a “choose-your-own adventure” experience – it is designed to give you a taste of the real world in the protection of an academic environment.

It's also going to be a safe space for us to collaborate with and question each other and our work. There are no right or wrong answers in this class, only our individual perspectives. We're going to create a “braintrust” (which you'll read more about in the required text) that will shape the outcomes of the class.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you shall be able to:

- Apply principles of human-centered design to conceptualize and develop ideas
- Critique methodologies of storytelling on multiple platforms and extrapolate to inform your own work
- Present high-level concepts to mixed audiences in an effective manner soliciting support for development of ideas
- Help others iterate ideas through constructive feedback

## **This is probably one of the few pieces of paper you'll get from me...**

The majority of our communication and information exchange will occur electronically. Please make sure you're familiar with Canvas. Assignments and communication will be through that system and through the Google Doc ecosystem for collaborative editing.

**Please send me an e-mail address that you have established a Google account** (e.g. a gmail address). Make sure you provide the UF system with an e-mail you check often because I will share information through these sites.

## **How will you be assessed?**

Your final grade will be a combination of:

- benchmark assignments, such as your cool-stuff presentations, weekly assignments, reading responses, etc. (35 percent),
- how your peers assess your performance (5 percent)
- assessments of your periodic status reports as you develop your project prototype (20 percent)
- and a cumulative assessment of your final product portfolios (40 percent). Your final work product evaluation will take into account the use of multiple media, innovative coverage, self-direction in addition to the quality of content produced.

An A indicates superior performance; B, highly competent, above-average work; C, average; D, below average; E, unsatisfactory. Final grades are calculated following the scale of 100-90, A; 89-80, B; etc. *Note:* ‘A’ work required significant independent work and thought. If you do everything I *ask* of you, the grading systems are calibrated so that you will earn a B.

### **A Note on Deadlines**

Deadlines will be very important in this course. **If they are not met, that deliverable will automatically fail.** I am not kidding. If you run into issues on reporting/producing, let me know as soon as possible. Do not let the deadline whiz by and then tell me you had problems. If you have documentation of a [University-sanctioned allowed absence](#), illness or other accommodation, please provide that information to me as soon as possible to the missed deadline and we will develop a plan to allow you to catch up.

### **Required Texts**

Catmul, E. and Wallace A., *Creativity Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration* (2014) 978-0812993011

Knapp, J. et al, *Sprint: How to solve big problems and test new ideas in just five days* (2016) 978-1501121746

Additional readings will be linked to and provided via Canvas

### **Our Schedule**

Our course formally meets Mondays from approximately 4:05 to 7 p.m. in Weimer Hall room 3324 or digitally via Google Hangouts. I will maintain the course schedule and meetings on the Canvas site. More than likely you may have some significant project work time *outside* these time periods. Be flexible and proactive when scheduling your semester – the semester’s close and project delivery will approach quicker than you would like or realize.

During the course, you’ll submit a number of deliverables (academese for assignments), and those assignments and the dates due will be posted on Canvas. You’ll have a number of weeks to complete works of journalism/media, and will have individual and group assignments as we collectively observe, collect and share “cool stuff” that others are doing.

*To borrow some language from the great Prof. Mike Foley:*

**CAUTION:** This is a professional course. The rules probably are different than those of other courses. You must not only do the work, but you must demonstrate that you can do the work acceptably within a limited time. Grades on stories can be lowered as the result of students misrepresenting themselves or otherwise being unprofessional while working on story assignments. Do NOT tell sources you are working for the Alligator or any other publication. Students often find sources are more willing to talk if the students are dressed appropriately.

**Sources:** One of the best ways to ensure your stories are fair accurate and complete is to gather information from a variety of sources. In selecting potential sources for your stories, keep in mind that we live in a diverse, multicultural world. You should make every effort to have your stories reflect that. Talk to a variety of people from different backgrounds, educational levels, etc. to get a complete story.

Students enrolled in this course should not be used as sources in your stories unless they are involved directly in the story. Friends, roommates, relatives, sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, etc. usually pose a conflict-of-interest threat when used as sources.

**Do your own reporting and writing.** Plagiarism—including using material from news releases and information gathered from the Internet without attribution—will result in serious and harsh consequences. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain and protect an environment of honesty, trust and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth herein constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1-4.017).

If you have even the smallest doubt or are confused about this or anything else in the course, PLEASE ASK.

</Foley>

Lectures and materials in this class are the property of the University/faculty member. Lectures may not be taped without permission from the lecturer and may not be used for any commercial purpose. Students found in violation may be subject to discipline under the University's Student Conduct Code.

The **University of Florida Honor Code** was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

**Preamble:** In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

**The Honor Code:** We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean will provide documentation to the student who must provide documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **Student Health and Wellness**

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength.

In case of emergency, call 911.

### **Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online [evaluations](#). You will be notified by email when the evaluations are open, typically in the last two or three weeks of the semester. Summary [results](#) are available to you and the public.

### **Academic Resources**

- E-learning technical support: 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learningsupport@ufl.edu](mailto:Learningsupport@ufl.edu) or reach the [website](#).
- For career advice and planning, or even help selecting a major or minor, contact the [Career Resource Center](#) in the Reitz Union, 392-1601.
- For help in finding resources, ask a UF librarian through [Library Support](#).
- General study skills and tutoring available from the [Teaching Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420.

Have a complaint? See the [UF Complaints Policy](#) for links and directions

## Working Course Schedule

|          | <b>What We're Covering</b>  | <b>Among the Things You'll Need to Do*</b>   |
|----------|---|--|
| Aug. 27  | Course Introductions<br>Storytelling and Cool Stuff Presentations                 |  |
| Sept. 3  | NO CLASS – Labor Day Holiday  |  |
| Sept. 10 | Introduction to Human Centered Design   | Complete and Submit Hit:Record Challenge     |
| Sept. 17 | Models of Creativity  | Read Innovator's Dilemma                     |
| Sept. 24 | Science of Story Building<br>Begin weekly "Cool Stuff" Presentations<br>Intro MVP | Complete Creativity Inc. reading             |
| Oct. 1   | MVP Workshop  | Group MVP Project                            |
| Oct. 8   | Models of Creativity, Part 2  |  |
| Oct. 15  | Models of Desirability  | Complete "Monday" sprint                     |
| Oct. 22  | Pitches   | Complete "Tuesday" sprint                    |
| Oct. 29  | Models of Feasibility   | Pitch<br>Complete "Wednesday" sprint         |
| Nov. 5   | Models of Viability   | Complete "Thursday" sprint                   |
| Nov. 12  | NO CLASS – Veteran's Day (observed)   |  |
| Nov. 19  | Project Workshop  | Project Status 1<br>Complete "Friday" sprint |
| Nov. 26  | Project Workshop  | Project Status 2                             |
| Dec. 3   | Project Presentations<br>Course Wrap  | Project Presentation                         |
| Dec. 13  | Final course portfolio due by 10 a.m. (scheduled final exam)                      |  |

*\* Assignments (benchmark) can and will be added and modified during the course of the semester. You will have at least a week to complete all assignments/light readings. Canvas will contain the master and expected deadlines for the semester.*