RTV 3305

In Depth Reporting

- Spring 2021

- Class meets Thursdays 4:05-7:05pm in Weimer 3020

- Instructor: Harrison Hove

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- Office phone: (352)294-1371

- Twitter, Slack: @harrisonhove

- Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm (virtual) (https://ufl.zoom.us/j/95558153503),

  or by appointment (in-person or virtual). Appointments are heavily encouraged so I can

  dedicate a full 30 minutes to you without interruption.

PURPOSE OF COURSE:

This course is designed to help prepare students for work in news with a focus on broadcast platforms. During the course, you will write, shoot, edit, and report your stories on camera. You will also learn about investigation techniques, tools, and public records law to aid in uncovering the Truth. You are expected to leave this course having created award-winning content and ready for employment at television stations or digital news outlets.

COURSE GOALS:

The goal of this course is to build a skill set that will position you for future success. This includes:

1. Identifying, requesting, and incorporating public records into news reporting.
2. Plan and research for mid and long-range investigations.

3. Create award winning video content.
4. Build a reporting reel needed for the job application process.
5. Publish all work.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Television reporters tell the stories of a community and all individuals that make up a given community. We serve, help, and inform everyone. In order to best carry out these ideals, we must exhibit respect, inclusiveness, and an understanding for all people. These expectations during field work will also be carried into this classroom. Our differences will serve as a strength that we embrace as we discuss relevant story ideas, developing contacts within a community, or even storytelling techniques. Exposure to different perspectives, values, ideals, and experiences will make us all better, more compassionate and understanding journalists.

We all learn best and maximize our outcomes when we feel comfortable. Please let me know what I can do to make sure you feel respected and welcomed in this space.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities – Additionally, I recognize many students might have unique learning needs and I am happy to be an active stakeholder, positioning you for success. I am also happy to work with students, on an individual basis, who are registered with DRC/Dean of Students Office and need classroom accommodations. I ask that you provide me with the necessary documentation to ensure I am serving and accommodating you in a way that best meets your needs.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Your health and safety are a main priority. The following rules will be observed for any in-person class meetings or appointments:

- Approved face coverings are required. Your nose and mouth must remain covered during the entire class and while present in any UF building.

- Physical distancing will be observed.

- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms](#).

- Additionally, course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies](#).

REQUIRED READING:

- ***Government-in-the-Sunshine-Manual.*** By: Florida Attorney General's Office
- http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/MNOS-B9QQ79/$file/SunshineManual.pdf

- Optional: Investigative Reporter & Editors is an organization that showcases strong enterprise and investigative reporting from across the country. An annual student membership costs $25 and includes a number of resources, tip sheets, a website, and contacts. This is helpful for any reporter and can help you generate lots of great, impactful story ideas.
- IRE also has a free weekly newsletter called "Local Matters." ["Local Matters" sign up link](#)

GRADING:

The percent-based grading scale in this class is: 93 - 105 (A), 90 - 92.99 (A-), 87 - 89.99 (B+), 83 - 86.99 (B), 80 - 82.99 (B-), 77 - 79.99 (C+), 73 - 76.99 (C), 70 - 72.99 (C-), 67 - 69.99 (D+), 60 - 66.99 (D), Below 60 (E). Note that there is *no rounding* in the points system. UF grading policies: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

The following are the components of your grade for the term:

Activities (100 points):

- Project 1 (Feature): 20 points
- Project 2 (Enterprise): 20 points
- Project 3 (Investigative): 25 points
- Monthly Mentor Check-in: 15 points
- Resume and reel: 20 points

Total points available: (100)

Projects

Students must complete three projects by the end of this course. In this course, you must find a way to manage your time appropriately and create these in-depth news packages. I will provide feedback every step of the way (story idea, sourcing, writing, editing), but I will not hold hands. The stories you create in this course should be award winning and could be featured on your reel. All work must be complete (including late work) by 4/16 at 5:00pm Eastern unless otherwise stated. You will upload your scripts to Canvas. You will upload your link in the comments sections for the given project in Canvas.

Monthly Mentor Check-In

You have been paired with a mentor working in the broadcast news industry. This person can review your work, talk about story ideas with you, offer career advice, and network. Cultivate and build this special relationship. You will be responsible for arranging at least one 30-minute phone call with your mentor per month (January, February, March, April). This is the second time I have attempted this in a course and welcome your feedback.

Resume and Reel

In order to obtain employment in the broadcast news industry, you must create a resume and reel. This activity requires you to submit a rough draft of both a traditional resume and a reel. I will offer constructive feedback to help you put your best professional foot forward to land a job. Submit the final draft of resume and reel incorporating previous feedback. Rough draft of resume and reel is due February 25th (in class). Final draft of resume and reel is due March 4th (in class).

ABSENCES:

You will maximize your learning outcomes by attending class regularly. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I understand unforeseen issues may rise. Please be proactive in your communication with me whenever possible. You are responsible for any and all work and must adhere to deadlines when applicable. Requirements for class attendance, exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found here: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx Because due dates are assigned in this syllabus at the beginning of the term, all work must be submitted by these

deadlines. If you are busy on these days, submit the work ahead of time or make arrangements with the course instructor BEFORE the deadline.

Special Note: Students are NOT allowed to turn in any project work for this class that has also been used or will be used as an assignment, project, report or interview for any other class without prior agreement from the instructor.

Missed Deadlines: Missed deadlines result in loss of points. Students will lose one point for each hour an assignment is late during the first five hours. After that, a student will lose five points per day. Example: If an assignment is worth 20 points and it is turned in two days late, a student can only earn a maximum of 10 points.

Credibility and Ethics: These are two highly valued elements in journalism. Students must create their own original work without consultation from anyone unless instructions explicitly state group collaboration is allowed. Students caught violating this directive in any manner, including but not limited to plagiarizing, lifting sentences directly from the prompt without paraphrasing, collaborating, other various forms of cheating, or any knowledge of these actions, will be given a recommended sanction as severe as a course grade penalty and referred for academic misconduct. Students caught cheating on any test or assignment in this class will also be given a zero and referred for academic misconduct. You are permitted to use any necessary editing special effects like color correct, transitions, and graphics/animations.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Not all classes fit your schedule or your academic plan, and I understand that. Please know, however, that I very much wish to meet with you before you drop (especially the deeper we get into the semester) to see what we can do to work through any challenges together. If you do have questions about how to drop or the impact on your transcript or financial aid, please visit the Academic Advising website.

SYLLABUS

Every effort has been made to create a syllabus that is as comprehensive and accurate as possible, but each class is a living entity and changes may arise. Please know I will notify you in writing as soon as any syllabus change may arise.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. 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." The Honor Code (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Note that failure to comply with this commitment will result in disciplinary action compliant with the UF Student Honor Code Procedures.
See http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/procedures/honorcode.php

Ethics are paramount in journalism. Always ask questions before you submit something if you are afraid you might be committing a violation. Communication is key.

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

UF Counseling Services –Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals. The resources include:

- -UF Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Rd, 392-1575, http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx, counseling services and mental health services.

- -U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or call (352)392-1575 so a team member can reach out to the student.

- -Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS). Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161

- -University Police Department 352-392-1111 or 911 for emergencies. www.police.ufl.edu

Academic Resources

- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career and job search services.

- E-Learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or email learning-support@ufl.edu

- Library Support, cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask

- Teaching Center, Broward Hall 352-392-2010. www.teachingcenter.ufl.edu

- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall (352)846-1138. This service offers help with brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. www.writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio

- Student Complaints: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf

SOFTWARE USE

Software Use – All faculty, staff and student of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

EVALUATIONS

Evaluations help me best serve you and future students. I would really appreciate your constructive feedback to aide this process. You can fill out this optional feedback by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in the Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/ .

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (1/14): Syllabus review; introductions; equipment policy review; what makes a WINNING story (the formula), examples.

Week 2 (1/21): Storytelling devices: character-centered, hook, reveal, circular storytelling; writing (in and out of bites), examples; sound brings it home (nats); public records- navigating the maze).

Week 3 (1/28): Photography; interview techniques; standups; public records part 2.

Week 4 (2/4): Editing; graphics drive a point home; public records part 3.

Week 5 (2/11): **Project 1 rough draft due by 4:05pm Eastern time**; Enterprise and investigative story ideas.

Week 6 (2/18): **Project 1 final version due by 4:05pm Eastern time**; Watch Project 1; Group critique.

Week 7 (2/25): Personalizing an investigation; finding sources, investigative project updates/FOIA updates.

Week 8 (3/4): Evaluating award winning content; job search; resume and reel.

Week 9 (3/11): Project 2 rough draft due by 4:05pm Eastern time; Peer review; assessing our needs.

Week 10 (3/18): Project 2 final version due by 4:05pm Eastern time. Group critiques.

Week 11 (3/25): Work ahead on project 3. Lingering questions; temperature check; time management.

Week 12 (4/1): Work ahead

Week 13 (4/8): **Project 3 rough draft due by 4:05pm Eastern time**.

Week 14 (4/15): **Project 3 final version due by 4:05pm Eastern time.** Bringing the investigative story together; closing thoughts.

Please note: This schedule is subject to change