

Advanced Reporting - JOU 4111 - Spring 2022

Instructor: Brandon Meyer

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Class hours/location: Thursday 3:00 p.m. - 4:55 p.m. / UST 0104

Office hours: By appointment

Overview

The purpose of this course is to enhance your reporting abilities which will enable you to tackle in-depth reporting assignments with speed, accuracy and confidence.

The bulk of classroom time will be spent refreshing and reinforcing basic journalism concepts to include sourcing, fact finding, ethics and newsworthiness, story design, clarity and flow, perspective, security and objectivity. Class meetings that coincide with a deadline will be dedicated to in-class story presentations.

You will be required to pitch, report and write two in-depth stories during the semester. I will serve as your editor. All stories must be pre-approved by me. It is your responsibility to keep me informed about how stories are progressing. Weekly update memos or meetings are expected. Memos should be submitted through Canvas or email, meetings should occur in person, by phone or by video.

The primary purpose of our interactions is to ensure that your story is moving forward in an expeditious manner at all times. In-depth reporting takes time. The slower you progress, the more difficult your job will be.

Grading

Assignment	Final Grade Percentage	Due Date
Attendance (15)	30%	Weekly
Quizzes (15)	30%	Weekly
Story 1	12.5%	February 25 @ Noon
Story 2	12.5%	April 15 @ Noon
Documents & Data (15)	15%	Weekly

Each story is worth 12.5% of your final grade. I require that the first story cover civil or criminal litigation, and the second story should be related to local or state politics or government.

The deadlines are generous. Late assignments will not be accepted. As long as you regularly communicate with me, this should not be an issue. I will guide you to a smooth and on-time landing.

Unexcused absences and tardiness are frowned upon. The lectures are important. I will deduct 2% from your final grade for each unexcused absence. The best way to avoid unexcused absences is to contact me in advance. I won't accept excuses for unexcused absences after-the-fact. Life happens, but I'm a reasonable person. e.g. If your car breaks down on the way to class, call me before class begins.

Grading Scale:

A = 94-100
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 75-79
C = 70-74
C- = 67-69
D+ = 63-66
D = 60-63
D- = 55-59
F = 54 or below

Materials

- Access to a computer during class. Bring a laptop.
- Google Docs, Sheets and Pinpoint. Have a Google account.
- Pen and paper
- Highlighters (A four-pack of assorted colors will suffice)

Honesty, Integrity

Don't plagiarize. Don't fabricate. Don't lie. Don't take sides. Don't mislead sources about your occupation or intent. Don't mislead sources about the substance of your story. Be professional. Be honest. Be forward. Be objective. These are pretty clear rules you should already be familiar with, but if you are approaching, or are in, an ethical quandary, call me before you do the wrong thing. Integrity and honesty violations will be dealt with in accordance with the student honor

code and the student conduct code. Here's a link:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Fact Errors

They happen, but it's your responsibility to ensure they disappear during the draft stage. If you need help verifying facts, I'm a phone call away. It's also perfectly OK to ask classmates or friends for a fresh set of eyes. They can check your work. Confirm a statement or quote with a source if you are unsure the message or context is accurate. There are few things more humiliating than a correction.

Classroom Accommodations

If you are in need of academic accommodations, please provide me with an accommodation letter and a list of accommodations you require. An accommodation letter can be obtained from the Disability Resource Center.

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodations/accommodation-letters/>

Diversity

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department of Journalism embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We expect each of our journalism courses to help foster an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

I want to create a learning environment for you that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official records, please let me know.
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please do not hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.
- If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Joanna Hernandez, CJC director of inclusion and diversity, is an excellent resource. You can email her at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.
- If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

Office Hours

My office is Weimer 3326 and is located on the upper floor of the INC. I will usually be on-campus Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Appointments are preferable, but you're free to drop by any time.

Mental Health

College can be a stressful and difficult experience. You are being challenged like never before. If you feel overwhelmed or just need someone to talk to, my door is always open and my phone is always on. I spent five years of my life in combat zones. I am familiar with the concept of stress. While I may not be able to relate to your particular situation, I promise you I can point you in the right direction.

It's OK to throw up your hands and ask for help.

It's important that you know that every member of the staff is equipped to assist you in a time of distress. If you prefer to talk to someone outside of the college, the Counseling and Wellness Center website has a plethora of services that you might find useful <https://counseling.ufl.edu/resources/>

You may also reach them by phone at 352-392-1575.

At a minimum, talk to somebody.

Course Evaluation

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 last two or three weeks of the semester. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

COVID-19

I expect you to wear a mask. If you're showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and quarantine in accordance with university instructions. <https://coronavirus.ufl.edu/>