

RTV 4930: Multimedia Sports Reporting Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. John W. Wright
3200A Weimer Hall
jwright@jou.ufl.edu
352-392-1975

Tuesday – Periods 10-11
5:10-7:05 PM
Section 1A56
Weimer 3024

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Annelie Schmittel

Overview and Objectives:

RTV 4930 is designed to offer instruction, analysis and training in sports information gathering and research, writing, interviewing and reporting. Special emphasis is placed on improving sports writing skills and reporting judgment, research and analysis of sports events and issues, basic sports production, radio reporting assignments and generation of sports content for the Internet. In addition, students receive practical experience in the Innovative News Center and WRUF-AM ESPN 850 studios in the College of Journalism and Communications.

Objectives and goals of the course include:

- (1) to develop skills to effectively research, gather and analyze sports information;
- (2) to develop skills to write high quality stories and features related to sports for on air radio broadcast and posting on the Internet, and to gain ability to record and edit audio obtained via phone or in-person;
- (3) to enhance understanding of the ethics and values of sports journalism;
- (4) to develop ability to understand relative newsworthiness of sports stories;
- (5) to develop ability to write and report “sound stories and features,” with the expectation work produced can and will be used for WRUF-AM ESPN 850, including air and the Internet;
- (6) to develop skills for interviewing athletes, coaches, sports managers and owners;
- (7) to develop understanding of the variety of sports sources used as a reporter;
- (8) to enhance skill in voicing work, live and recorded, on-the-air;
- (9) to enhance understanding of UF, local, high school, national and international sports;
- (10) to learn about websites and other sources for sports research, as well for production of content for the WRUF-AM ESPN 850 website.

Course Eligibility: Students must have received a grade of “C” or better in RTV 2100, MMC 2100 or JOU 3109c. Students also must gain approval of the Director of Sports Journalism and Communications in conjunction with sports personnel at WRUF-AM ESPN 850.

Course Fee: \$85.89

Required Equipment: Gathering sound (interviews, media days, teleconferences, etc.) is vital, and students will use many different means to collect sound. Before you will be able to check out digital audio recorders for projects, you must receive operational training both with and without a stick mic, as well as other means of audio collection. The newsroom has recorders for you to

use for your projects and the Dept. of Telecommunication has recorders you may check out (See guidelines for checking out equipment).

Attendance Policy: Attendance in the class is required. Excused absences include approved UF attendance exceptions. In all instances of excused absences the instructor and student will work out a plan for completing missed assignments.

Attendance otherwise is expected unless the student is absent. In case of illness, the instructor should be notified in advance whenever possible, and a physician's note may be required. Multiple unexcused absences will result in a severe grade penalty. If you miss quizzes due to an unexcused absence you will not be able to make up the work.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with UF policies which can be found in the online catalog at:

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

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. Please turn off cell phones prior to class. Sports reporting is a deadline-based profession, so you are expected to arrive on time for each class.

Academic Integrity: 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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. For more information visit the Honor Code web page at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> or contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 **Peabody Hall, 392-1261**.

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

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on a minimum of 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available to students at the above website.

Course Grading: Students will be graded in accordance with UF policies for assigning grade points as articulated in the link that follows.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Course Grading Components

Weekly Sports Knowledge Quizzes	10%
Writing Assignments	20%
Weekly Sports Knowledge Quizzes	10%
Project One	10%
Project Two	10%
Project Three	15%
Project Four	20%
Multimedia Property Work	30%
Website	5%

There will be no opportunity for extra credit assignments other than assignments that may be offered to the entire class. Because there are strict deadlines in the profession, any project turned in late will be penalized at least 50% with no exceptions.

Grading Scale:	A	(93-100%)
	A-	(90-92.99%)
	B+	(87-89.99%)
	B	(83-86.99%)
	B-	(80-82.99%)
	C+	(77-79.99%)
	C	(73-76.99%)
	C-	(70-72.99%)
	D+	(67-69.99%)
	D	(63-66.99%)
	D-	(60-62.99%)
	E	(under 60%)

Sports Knowledge Quizzes:

Each week, at the beginning of class, the instructor will administer a current information sports knowledge quiz containing information about UF, State of Florida, national or international sports. The instructor will inform the students of the general topic prior to the quiz. Working in sports requires a well-rounded understanding of sports and the quizzes serve as a motivation to learn as much as possible about the field in which students will be working.

Station Work:

Students are required to receive professional training and experience for a minimum of six hours each week in the Innovation News Center and WRUF-AM ESPN 850 studios. This is a critical component of the course and the evaluation of the effectiveness of this training experience will comprise 30% of the final grade. Training may include research, writing sports updates and web stories, control board operations and covering and reporting on events such as press conferences and sports competitions.

Shifts may include evening or weekend hours, and can change, and you may be asked to work during times outside your regular shifts. The weekend and evening shifts should be seen as recognition of your good work. This typically means you have been asked to cover an event because you have done excellent work at the station. This will provide you with additional

valuable experience. Steve Russell, Sports Director for the multimedia properties, will assign the shifts.

Introductory training sessions will be held during the second and third weeks of the semester at WRUF-AM ESPN 850. Attendance is required even for students who have worked previously at one of the College's multimedia properties. The sessions will be held at 6:45 pm, hopefully on Tuesday, starting near the end of the second class. Attendance at the session is required. Please let me know ahead of time if you become contagiously ill or otherwise too ill to attend either session.

Important: In lieu of a final exam, you will be working at the station through the end of finals week. Please mark this down on your calendars because it cannot be a surprise at the end of the semester.

You must cover your shift each time and be on time. If you cannot work, you are responsible for getting someone to cover the shift for you and informing the sports director.

There is a professional dress code for the multimedia properties. Students must be prepared at all times to be sent out to press conferences or other events. When you go, you represent the properties, the College and the University of Florida. Closed toed shoes and collared shirts are required. Neutral colors are required for sports journalism students, meaning no orange or blue or UF attire. In addition, athletic wear, hats, sleeveless shirts and flip-flops are not allowed. The dress code for 2014-14 will be distributed in class.

Class Projects/details to come:

Project One:

Feature story on a student athlete

Project Two:

Feature story on a former UF athlete (text, photo and wrap)

Project Three:

Advance of a specific athletic team at UF (photos/video, text and wrap)

(Story will focus on expectations for upcoming season or postseason of a UF athletic team. No stories permitted on football or men's basketball teams, and all students must go through the sport's SID to contact student athletes.)

Project Four:

Professional sports team or player story (text and wrap)

(Feature story of a professional sports team.)

All projects will be expected to be of high quality work. After suggestions for revisions by the instructor or multimedia properties staff members, students will be expected to produce work of sufficiently high quality to post to the WRUF-AM 850 ESPN website. In addition, part of the grade for each assignment will involve pitching story ideas to the instructor one week before the due date to ensure the topic is acceptable and involves a story that reasonably can be completed.

On days projects are due, students will present a report on their work in class and receive feedback from the instructor and classmates.

Please email your story to the instructor and bring a hard copy to class.

Website: Your goal should be to have your work seen by as many people as possible to improve your brand and to begin to establish yourself as a professional and experienced sports reporter. This means getting your stories on the ESPN 850 WRUF website and having a means to present this work to potential employers. We will do everything we can to mentor and help you. You will create your own personal website where you can showcase your work this semester. We will review websites in class at the end of the semester, but you should begin setting up your website by week FOUR.

You must be prepared to create the personal website to showcase your work.

The most user friendly option to create your own website is WordPress. If you do not already have a WordPress account (or your own site), you can create one by going to

<http://wordpress.com/>. Step-by-step instructions on how to create your site are provided.

You can use a host other than WordPress, such as Weebly or Webs.

A finished site includes any stories you can link to that you did for the ESPN 850 WRUF site, a professional Twitter account to scroll on the site, a LinkedIn account connected to the site, and any photos you took that were not included in a story for the WRUF site.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One (Jan. 6):	Intro to class and review of syllabus; the basics of sports journalism; relationship to other sports communication fields
Week Two (Jan. 13):	History and growth of sports journalism; methods of information gathering and research in sports; Web writing exercises; Multimedia property professional training begins.
Week Three (Jan 20):	Emphasis on sports writing for the Web; various forms and approaches to sports reporting; effective use of sound bites and quotes; writing exercises Shifts start this week. Discussion of Project One (Handout)
Week Four (Jan 27):	News judgment and sports; ethics and values of high quality sports journalism; types of sports stories. Writing exercises <i>Project One pitches due.</i>
Week Five (Feb. 3):	<u>Project One Due: presentations and analysis</u> Reports on projects Discussion of Project Two (Handout)

- Week Six (Feb. 10): Interviewing techniques for athletes, coaches, sports managers and owners; researching sources of information on sports figures;
Project Two pitches due
- Week Seven (Feb. 17) Handling press conferences/teleconferences; social media and sports journalism
- Week Eight (Feb. 24) **Project Two Due: presentations and analysis**
Discuss Project Three (Handout)
- Week Nine: (March 3): **SPRING BREAK**
- Week Ten: (March 10) Sports and Culture (Guest Speaker)
More discussion of Project Three Strategies
- Week Eleven: (March 17): Sports talk programming vs. sports reporting and the live broadcast
Bring to class a sports project completed at ESPN 850.
Project Three pitches due
- Week Twelve: (March 24): ESPN assessment; working a sports journalism beat; the various sports networks
Discuss Project Four (Handout)
- Week Thirteen: (March 31): **Project Three Due: presentations and analysis**
- Week Fourteen: (April 7): Ethics case studies and exercises; using media guides
Bring in web story completed at ESPN 850.
- Week Fifteen (April 14): Sports journalist guest lecture, in class or Skype
- Week Sixteen: (April 21): **Project Four Due: presentations and analysis**

***NOTE: Topic schedule subject to change based on guest availabilities and other factors. There will be no change in project due dates or for the examination.**

Newsroom shifts run through May 1 in lieu of final exam.