

**RTV 4930**  
**Sports & Travel Reporting**  
**Australia, Summer 2013**



**Instructor**

Andrew Selepak, PhD  
Weimer 3053  
[aselepak@ufl.edu](mailto:aselepak@ufl.edu)

**Course overview & objectives**

This course is designed to provide an overview of the principles of multimedia reporting with a focus on Australian sports and heritage sites, and applying these principles through practical exercises in multimedia presentations.

This is a seminar-type course with an emphasis on writing as well as media production. As a class we will discuss, critique and work together to complete assignments.

**How the class works**

This class meets for less than a month while we are in Australia, so the course requires you to do work both before we depart and after we return. This spring semester you will have to research the various sporting events taking place in Australia while we are there and be prepared to cover a different sporting event each week which will require some pre-planning. OR you will need to do some research to find historical or cultural sites/activities only found in Australia and produce multimedia projects showcasing these sites/activities.

In addition, **I will meet with each student individually prior to our trip to ensure you have found four sporting events and/or four cultural sites/activities to cover.** While you may have to switch events to cover once we reach Australia because of scheduling conflicts or travel, it will still be your responsibility to have **FOUR** events/sites/activities planned prior to our leaving.

**Read the book assigned to this class completely before we leave the U.S.** Many of you may have never produced multimedia online content. When we arrive in Australia, we meet regularly as a group to discuss Australian sports and Australian cultural sites/activities. These discussions should assist you in being able to cover events. Out-of-class exercises will require you to attend sporting events and/or cultural sites/activities producing original content of these events in various multimedia formats. It is imperative you read the book before we leave so you have an understanding of multimedia coverage. We only have a month in Australia, and you will need to be prepared for classes before we arrive. The text will provide an overview of what you will be required to do for this class.

**Course materials**

- **Required texts:**
  - Thornburg, Ryan. *Producing Online News: digital skills, stronger stories*. CQ Press, 2011.

## **Grading**

The goal for this class is for you to complete multimedia stories in sports and travel to demonstrate your ability to produce work in a multimedia environment. This means everything you do in this class is with the goal of showcasing your work to future employers. Your peers will have multimedia stories from events in the United States, but this is your opportunity to show stories you can produce in another country with the thought being this will set you apart. We will create a website for this class using WordPress where you will post your work. Both WUFT and ESPN 850 use WordPress for their CMS and some of you may already be familiar with it. Using the WordPress site is relatively easy and putting your stories on there will allow you the ability to share them and for others to find them.

You can choose to do all sports stories, all travel stories, or a combination, but you will have to complete **FOUR** total stories.

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Meeting before we leave         | 10% |
| Providing four stories to cover | 5%  |
| Bio page with photo             | 5%  |
| Text and photo story            | 20% |
| Slideshow story                 | 20% |
| Two multimedia stories          | 40% |

Information on current University of Florida grading policies can be found at:  
<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

### **Meet before we leave (10%)**

Many of you have never worked as a sports or travel reporter before, and have limited firsthand experience in the media field. Additionally, many of you most likely have never produced multimedia stories on the go before. For this reason, before we leave, Steve Johnson will speak to the group about being a reporter on the go and will talk to all of you about how to cover events with multimedia. Before we meet, I suggest you look at his blog to see some of the work he has done in the past at [Journos2go](#). We will meet with him in April as a group. Attendance is mandatory.

### **Providing four stories to cover (5%)**

Prior to leaving for Australia, you will need to do some research on sporting events going on while we are there OR cultural sites/activities that you would like to do stories on while we are there. You do not want to wait till we get there to start to think about what you want to cover. So, before we leave, I will meet with each of you and we can discuss which events you plan to cover. If you are doing travel reporting, you can cover some of the sites and activities we will be taking part in for the trip. For example, on May 14<sup>th</sup>, we will be going to the [Tobruk Sheep Station](#). This would make a visually interesting travel story. But, you can also cover sites and activities that you find on your own.

If you are doing sports reporting, you will have to find events that you can cover. This means you will need to look for sporting events taking place in Australia while we are there. One event could be Australia's largest [half marathon](#).

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, the Sydney Roosters of the National Rugby League will be playing a match in town. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, the [Waratahs play the Stormers](#) at Allianz Stadium in Sydney. I have spoken with the [NRL](#), and will be trying to set up something for us as well. In addition, you can do stories on the media coverage of Australian sports and the athletes, or the culture surrounding the events. Sports are about more than just the events themselves but also the culture surrounding these events. Story ideas include:

- How available are athletes to be interviewed?
- How many other reporters cover events?
- What are the crowds and stadiums like in Australia and how does it compare to professional sporting events in the United States?
- Do fans sing or chant during matches, or is music played in the stadium or arena?
- Some of the athletes involved in Australian sports are American, if you have the chance to interview them, how do they describe playing overseas and the culture of sports in Australia?

It is possible to cover a sporting event based on the result on the field **AND** a story about the atmosphere outside of the event on the field.

Two years ago during the Study Abroad trip to Italy, one of the students from this class produced a story on [an American playing American football in Italy](#). Another did a story on a [rowing coach in Florence](#). Another did a story about [Bologna football fans](#).

### **A bio on the class website (5%)**

All of the stories you do for this class will go on the class website that I will help you all put together. On the website there will be a page for you to provide your own bio sketch and a photo. This is important because you should all be thinking about how to brand yourself and part of that is to have an appropriate headshot you can use for when people look for you on the web. It is also important to be able to describe yourself and what you do in a paragraph. The bio page will be your opportunity to start doing this for the future.

### **Text and photo story (20%)**

Each of you will do **ONE** text only story with an accompanying photo. This will be a 300-400 word story about a sporting event or cultural site/activity. You will need to do some research on the event or site/activity to write 300-400 words which means you will need to find out more on the Internet (and therefore include appropriate hyperlinks), and talk to people involved so you can provide quotes for your story. This story is best to do for an event or site/activity that may not provide the best opportunities to take multiple photographs or may be too difficult to get video of the event/players or site/activity.

### **Text and photo gallery story (20%)**

Each of you will do **ONE** text only story with **MULTIPLE** photos. This will be a 300-400 word story about a sporting event or cultural site/activity including research, quotes and hyperlinks. You will need to include at a **MINIMUM FIVE** quality images of the event or site/activity. WordPress allows you to post multiple photos to the site to create a gallery. To see examples of galleries on WordPress, look [here](#) at the ESPN 850 site of photos taken of Gators sports by Christine Casey.

The goal is to show the sporting event or cultural site/activity. Visual storytelling is important. You want to be able to show what an event or site/activity looks like for an audience that may never get to witness it firsthand. Regardless of the medium you chose to work in, being able to photograph an event or site/activity is a vital part of storytelling and adds a level of detail impossible through words alone.

You will still be creating a text story, but you will also be providing multiple photos to accompany your story.

### **Two multimedia stories (40%)**

You will need to complete **TWO** stories covering a sporting event or cultural site/activity with text and an additional form of multimedia. Your story should include 300- 400 words of text and have a multimedia element beyond photos. This may be a video or sound. The video/sound could be of someone you interviewed or the video could be of the event or cultural site/activity. You will have access to two Kodak ZI8 pocket cams to take video or sound. But there are only two, so if you do not have your own equipment, this means you will need to cover an event or site/activity when the equipment is available.

You may want to do sound only from an interview with someone about an event or site/activity, the easiest to use program for this is Sound Cloud. Two years ago during the Study Abroad trip to Italy, a student produced a story about [American football in Italy](#) with just an audio story uploaded to Sound Cloud.

You may want to try your hand at video and editing together a video piece. During the Study Abroad trip to Italy, one student produced a story on a [football match between Bologna FC and AS Bari](#). Notice they uploaded the video to YouTube, or you could also use Vimeo.

I do not expect the multimedia stories to rival ESPN.COM or travel.com, but it should look professional and include quality work.

Within two weeks of our return, you must complete all **FOUR** assignments and make any corrections from me and then post these stories to the class website. The website will consist of everyone's stories from before, during, and after our trip.

### **CLASS RULES!**

Punctuality is of utmost importance in the media industry. Late assignments will be penalized. We will only meet a limited number of times in Australia. **If you miss class a letter grade will be deducted off your final grade.** No exceptions! If you are late to class, a half a letter grade will be deducted off your final grade. No exceptions!

The best way to learn how to produce media pieces is to produce them. For this reason, much of your class time will be spent reviewing ways to produce better pieces and how to improve the pieces you create. This is why it is imperative you read the text before we leave for Australia, so rather than spending time learning how to produce stories, we can spend our time learning how to improve our stories.

### **Prerequisites**

A grade of C or better in RTV 2100 or JOU 3101.

### **Assignments**

Completion of assignments and posting them to the class website are the two most important aspects of the assignments for this class.

Outside of following directions and mechanics, stories will be graded on creativity. Creativity is hard to measure. Each assignment will be judged on its own merit. I encourage creativity.

Establish your own voice. It's the ONLY way to get noticed in a competitive environment.

### **University Honor 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.

There are six specific types of violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines: cheating, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy and fabrication. Naturally, plagiarism and any form of cheating are unacceptable. If I find you've cheated – on any assignment – you will be dismissed from the course. Take this commitment to academic honesty and integrity seriously.

### **Addendums and Changes**

During this course, I reserve the right to amend and change the syllabus, readings, and assignments. If I change a date and you miss the announcement because you were absent you may not make up that assignment.

### **Disability Awareness**

Students with Disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) prior to leaving for Australia so that reasonable accommodations may be implemented before departure. DRC is located in room 001 in Reid Hall or you can contact them by phone at 352-392-8565.

**Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>