

**JOU 4910-192B: JOURNALISM RESEARCH**

Mondays 12:50-3:50, CBD 0238

**PROFESSOR**Frank Waddell, Ph.D.  
frank.waddell@jou.ufl.edu**OFFICE HOURS**3067 Weimer Hall  
Tue 1:00-3:00pm; Wed 2:00-4:00pm**REQUIRED READINGS***Research Methods for Communication Science*, James H. Watt & Sjef Van Den Berg*APA Style Guide*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition

Other readings posted on Canvas

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Journalists are the primary conduit between scientists and the general public. To properly report on science-related news, it is necessary for journalists to have a strong understanding of basic research concepts and terminology. To that end, JOU 4910 will introduce students to the principles of research methods in the social and behavioral sciences. By the end of the semester, students will be able to effectively interpret, evaluate, and write about research from a variety of methodological approaches including experimental design, cross-sectional studies, and qualitative methods.

**GRADING**

Attendance/Participation:	10%
Academic Interview:	10%
Article Critique:	10%
Research Press Release:	20%
Midterm Exam:	20%
In-depth Research Story:	30%

Grading scale: A, 100-93; A-, 92-90; B+, 89-87; B, 86-84; B-, 83-80; C+, 79-77; C, 76-74; C-, 73-70; D+, 69-67; D, 66-64; D-, 63-60; E, 59 and below

## ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES

**Attendance/Participation (10%):** Our class meets one time a week. This means that one absence from class is equivalent to missing one week worth of material. As a result, attendance is mandatory and critical for student success. Students are expected to read before coming to class and be prepared to participate in class discussion. Your grade for “attendance/participation” will be determined by the consistency of your attendance and the quality of your involvement in class discussion.

**Academic Interview (10%):** Learning to speak with researchers is an essential skill for any science journalist. This assignment will require you to interview a professor or graduate student from CJC about a research methods related topic (topics will be assigned to students during the second week of class). Following the interview, students will be asked to assess the accuracy of the interview by consulting with outside sources. Finally, you will write a 3-5 page summary of the topic based on evidence derived from your interviews and supporting outside materials. All citations should be reported using APA style, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. for this and subsequent assignments. **DUE SEPTEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>.**

**Article Critique (10%):** Journalists must be able to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research before reporting to the general public. This assignment will require you to select a peer reviewed journal article from the social and behavioral sciences (article to be pre-approved by the professor prior to completing the assignment). After reading the article, you will be asked to create a handout and complete an in-class presentation (with accompanying visual aid, such as PowerPoint or Prezi) that summarizes the methodology and findings of the study as well as critiques the strengths and weaknesses of the work. **DEADLINE TBD IN WEEK 2.**

**Midterm Exam (20%):** To ensure comprehension and retention of basic social scientific terminology, a midterm exam will be conducted. The exam (20-30 questions) will include multiple choice and short answer responses. A study guide will be provided two weeks in advance of the exam. **EXAM ADMINSTERED ON OCTOBER 17<sup>TH</sup>.**

**Research Press Release (20%):** Choose a “newsworthy” article from a social scientific journal (article to be pre-approved by the professor prior to completing the assignment). Read the article, then write a 1-2 page press release for a generalist audience. This press release should both summarize the methodology and findings of the work as well as include quotes from expert sources on the topic, such as the original author of the work or a researcher from the related field of study. Work will be evaluated based on the diversity of sources used and the accuracy of the summary provided. **DUE OCTOBER NOVEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>.**

**In-depth Research Story (30%):** Combining all of the skills and knowledge you have learned throughout the semester, complete a thorough review of social scientific research in an area of your choosing (area to be pre-approved by professor before completing assignment). Review peer-reviewed articles, read book chapters, and consult with academics who are experts in your chosen topic area. Based on this background research, write an in-depth news story (5-10 pages) for a generalist audience that summarizes research findings from this area and provides commentary on the quality and persuasiveness of findings in the area. **DUE DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>.**

### **LATE WORK POLICY**

One letter grade (-10 points) will be deducted per day for work submitted past the assignment's deadline. If students anticipate that they will be unable to meet a deadline due to university documented issues (e.g., health condition, death in family), please contact me as soon as possible to arrange an extension. In general, I am quite willing to work with students when issues arise that prevent you from submitting work on time. However, it is necessary for these discussions regarding late work to occur either before or recently after (e.g., within a week) the original deadline for the assignment. Work that is more than 10 days late will be given a "0" unless you contact the professor to arrange an alternative due date within the week that the assignment was due. If you miss the midterm exam, you will need to provide a documented excuse for your absence and arrange an alternative time to take the test within a week of the original exam.

### **HONOR CODE POLICY**

This class strictly adheres to the UFW honor code. Any prohibited behavior such as plagiarism, data fabrication, or cheating will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question and referral to the honor court, who may administer additional penalties such as a failing grade for the course or dismissal from the college. More information about the university honor code is available online at the following link: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

### **CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

It is expected that all students will arrive to class on time and be respectful of fellow classmates during lecture and student presentations. Please turn all cell phones to silent. While laptops are allowed, it is expected that they will only be used for class-related work such as note-taking or group assignments. In the event that you need to answer an emergency phone call, please excuse yourself from class and answer the call in the hallway. The professor reserves the right to revoke the use of technology during class if the above policies are not followed.

**Schedule**

August 22 <sup>nd</sup> :	Course Overview; Introduction to Science Communication
August 29 <sup>th</sup> :	Fundamentals of Science Reporting, Part 1
September 5 <sup>th</sup> :	Labor Day, No Class
September 12 <sup>th</sup> :	Fundamentals of Science Reporting, Part 2
September 19 <sup>th</sup> :	Experimental Design and Causation, Part 1
September 26 <sup>th</sup> :	Experimental Design and Causation, Part 2
October 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	Surveys, Polls and Correlation, Part 1
October 10 <sup>th</sup> :	Surveys, Polls and Correlation, Part 2
October 17 <sup>th</sup> :	Midterm Exam
October 24 <sup>th</sup> :	Qualitative Research, Part 1
October 31 <sup>st</sup> :	Qualitative Research, Part 2
November 7 <sup>th</sup> :	Descriptive and Inferential Statistics
November 14 <sup>th</sup> :	Science Communication Theory, Part 1
November 21 <sup>st</sup> :	Science Communication Theory, Part 2
November 28 <sup>th</sup> :	Meta-Science and Replication, Part 1
December 5 <sup>th</sup> :	Meta-Science and Replication, Part 2