

# JOU 4201: News Center Practicum

**Fall 2016**

*Innovation News Center Labs:* Monday-Friday, periods 2-6  
(9:30-2:45—day determinate upon course section)

*Lecture:* Periodic Mondays, period 9 (4:05-4:55), FLG 0260

**Instructor:** Gary Green, *Deputy News Editor and Digital Director, Innovation News Center* | [ggreen@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ggreen@jou.ufl.edu) | @garywgreen | 352-294-1502

## **Lab Assistants:**

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**Course Description** This is a newsroom experience course that produces and edits journalism in the Innovation News Center (Weimer 2300). Half the semester is spent on developing the skills toward the editing role of a Web producer. The other half is spent producing content tailored to our media outlets' audiences. Many days you will be working in both capacities throughout your shifts.

The INC is a professional newsroom for WUFT and WRUF/ESPN stations and websites. These are not campus stations. They are professional news outlets serving adults in North Central Florida. So for this class, think and act like a professional journalist. In other words, treat this like a job or internship. If you

do, you will get better clips, you will better prepare yourself for a job and you'll get a better grade. It also prepares you for working in a professional workplace: office politics, communicating your ideas, garnering attention and interacting with management. Even if a journalism industry job is not your destination, you'll gain valuable work experience to apply toward your chosen profession.

Because this is a real newsroom, your workday will vary. On any given day you could be editing a story for [wuft.org](http://wuft.org), running out the door to chase breaking news, recording it for radio (WUFT-FM/NPR) or explaining it on live TV (WUFT-TV/PBS).

## **Course Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Function effectively as a web editor in a live newsroom by tightening flabby writing, checking facts and attributions, questioning assertions, finding omissions, ensuring fairness, writing compelling headlines and assisting with breaking news.
- Produce daily stories that are pitched at the daily story meeting (9:30 a.m. in the INC conference room on second floor of newsroom) and published for a general adult audience on [wuft.org](http://wuft.org).
- Function effectively as a social media producer in a live newsroom by publishing content on various social media platforms, monitoring local, regional and state social media channels for breaking and developing stories and engaging the audience through social media and email newsletters.

## **Section Leaders**

There are three teaching assistants (Ms. Tarasevich, Ms. Magnum and Mr. Stone) who will handle the sections of the

course. You will also be working in collaboration with students and news managers from our radio and TV platforms.

### **Course Intranet**

Most details about how to function in the INC – from finding stories to writing headlines – are on the [WUFT News intranet](http://www.wuft.org/newsroom) (<http://www.wuft.org/newsroom>). (The username is *newsroom* and the password is *newsroom*.)

### **Required Equipment**

All you need is a smartphone with recommended apps (see the WUFT News Intranet and Canvas for details) or a point-and-shoot camera and an audio recorder. If you have a DSLR, you may use it for video and/or stills. We have a few that are available for check out from a news manager.

**\*Visual story assets** (*photos, videos, Gifs, infographics, charts, interactives, and the like. We do not accept photos of buildings or signs; we tell stories about people*) **and audio are required for EVERY story submission.**

### **Required Textbook**

*Inside Reporting*. Harrower, T., 2009. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. (Majority of reporting/editing questions can be answered with this text. You are expected to have it with you at all times. Before you ask a news manager, look it up.)

Strunk, William, and E. B. White. *The elements of style*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999. ISBN 978-0205309023 (Invaluable reference for writing clean, simple prose. You should carry this with you throughout your career. Keep it close for quick references.)

### **Transportation:**

If you don't have a vehicle to get off campus to pursue a story

you should consider Zipcar. Zipcar is a car-sharing program that has several vehicles on campus you can rent by the hour for a price that includes gasoline and insurance. UF students can join Zipcar for \$25 (that's half-price), which includes \$35 in driving credit. Uber is also an option as is the bus system. Resourceful journalists find better stories. Don't use not having a car as an excuse. WUFT's audience extends far beyond Gainesville and therefore requires reporting away from campus. Go in person for interviews whenever possible. It is difficult to add color and telling details to your story from the newsroom.

*\*WUFT also has a news car that you will on occasion have the opportunity to use.*

## **Student Roles**

The class requires every student to fill two roles: Web producer and story content creator.

1. **Web producers** work in the INC during the lab section for which they have an INC shift. In the editing module you will be primarily editing incoming stories, copy, audio, photos and video for publication on [wuft.org/news](http://wuft.org/news) from online, TV and radio reporters. You will also assist in aggregating web stories from our wire services including CNN, AP, News Service Florida, Public Radio Exchange, Florida Public Radio, etc..., as well as reporting on and writing breaking news. You will be responsible for publishing editorial content from WUFT News' radio, TV and web onto social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram. In addition to publishing our content, you will monitor other social media channels germane to our audience to alert the newsroom of developing stories.

2. **Content creators** In the daily reporting module you will attend the daily story budget meeting (9:30 a.m.), pitch your daily story, report and write your story on deadline to be published by the end of your shift. You will at times be assigned a different story

than your pitch, depending on the news of the day. You will frequently be expected to go out on assignment along with our TV and radio students who will also be producing content for our 5 p.m. newscast on Florida’s 5, WUFT- TV (PBS) and 89.1, WUFT- FM (NPR).

### **Class Rotation**

Each section will be split in half to be placed into the Orange or Blue group. *(Posted in Canvas)*

1. Those in the Blue group will spend the first lab (after orientation) of the semester reporting as content creators. Content creators **MUST** have a pitch or pitches for the daily story conference at 9:30. **Those pitches must be submitted via the Newsroom Intranet no later than 24 hours in advance.**

2. Those in the Orange group will start the semester (after orientation) as Web producers and editors.

3. Everyone will rotate each week throughout the semester.

*\*These will start the second week after the first lecture. The first week will be orientation.*

### **Lab shifts start August 22.**

*\*Subject to change and margin of error*

	Blue GROUP					Orange GROUP				
Week Of	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
Aug. 22	Lab	Lab	Lab	Lab	Lab	Lab	Lab	Lab	Lab	Lab
Aug. 29	Story1	Story 1	Story 1	Story	Story 1	Edit 1	Edit 1	Edit 1	Edit 1	Edit 1
Sept. 5	HLDY	Edit1	Edit 1	Edit 1	Edit 1	HLDY	Story	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1
Sept. 12	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Edit 2	Edit 2	Edit 2	Edit 2	Edit 2
Sept. 19	Edit 2	Edit 2	Edit 2	Edit 2	Edit 2	Story 2	Story	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2
Sept. 26	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Edit 3	Edit 3	Edit 3	Edit 3	Edit 3
Oct. 3	Edit 3	Edit 3	Edit 3	Edit 3	Edit 3	Story 3	Story	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3

Oct. 10	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	HLDY	Edit 4	Edit 4	Edit 4	Edit 4	HLDY
Oct. 17	Edit 4	Edit 4	Edit 4	Edit 4	Edit 4	Story 4	Story	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4
Oct. 24	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Edit 5	Edit 5	Edit 5	Edit 5	Edit 5
Oct. 31	Edit 5	Edit 5	Edit 5	Edit 5	Edit 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5
Nov. 7	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	HLDY	Edit 6	Edit 6	Edit 6	Edit 6	HLDY
Nov. 14	Edit 6	Edit 6	Edit 6	Edit 6	Edit 6	Story 6	Story	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6
Nov. 21	Story 7	Story 7	HLDY	HLDY	HLDY	Edit 7	Edit 7	HLDY	HLDY	HLDY
Nov. 28	Edit 7	Edit 7	Edit 7	Edit 7	Edit 7	Story 7	Story	Story 7	Story 7	Story 7
Dec. 5	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Reading	Days	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Reading	Days
Dec. 12										

## Lecture Schedule

Because of the intense nature of the labs, we will not be meeting weekly for our lectures. We will meet the first Monday of the semester, August 22, and will call additional gatherings as needed during the semester. We will announce additional meetings by Thursday the week prior via notice on Canvas.

## Assignments and Grading

Story creator performance (see section below for details) ..47.5%

Web producer performance (see section below for details).47.5%

Lecture & Newsroom Intranet Quizzes ..... 5%

## Grading Scale

The minimum score to pass this course is a C, or 72.5. Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point: 89.4 rounds down to 89 (B+) while 89.5 rounds up to 90 (A-). More details on the university's grading policy can be found in the undergraduate catalog online.

	Percent		Percent		Percent		Percent
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		B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%
A	100-93%	B	86-83%	C	76-73%	D	66-63%
A-	93-90%	B-	82-80%	C-	72-70%	D-	62-60%

## Attendance

Course requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with UF policy. An absence can be accommodated if and only if (a) the absence is covered by UF policy, (b) you call your lab instructor at least 30 minutes before class begins, and (c) you promptly provide written documentation for the absence.

INC attendance is mandatory. See the Web Producer section for more detail.

**CAUTION:** This is a professional course. The rules are probably different than those of other courses. You must not only do the work, but you must demonstrate that you can do the work acceptably within a limited time. Missed deadlines can result in automatic failure of the assignment/project. Stories with conflicts of interest of the reporter shall also result in automatic failure. Grades on stories can be lowered (e.g. to zero) as the result of students misrepresenting themselves or otherwise being unprofessional while working on story assignments. Do NOT tell sources you are working for the *Alligator* or any other publication. Students often find sources are more willing to talk if the students are dressed appropriately and presenting themselves as professional reporters.

**Sources:** One of the best ways to ensure your stories are fair, accurate and complete is to gather information from a variety of sources. In selecting potential sources for your stories, keep in mind that we live in a diverse, multicultural world. You should make every effort to have your stories reflect that. Talk to a variety of people from different backgrounds, educational levels, etc. to get a complete story.

Students enrolled in this course should not be used as sources in your stories. Friends, roommates, relatives, sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, etc. usually pose a conflict-of-interest threat when used as sources.

**Do your own reporting and writing.** Plagiarism—including using material from news releases and information gathered from the Internet without attribution (**Hyperlink whenever possible!**)—will result in serious and harsh consequences. Should that be discovered, you will fail the course and be recommended for expulsion from the University. You can find the college's official ethical standards at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty/demic/jou/honesty/>. If you have even the smallest doubt or are confused about this or anything else in the course, PLEASE ASK.

Lectures and materials in this class are the property of the University/faculty member. Lectures may not be taped without permission from the lecturer and may not be used for any commercial purpose. Students found in violation may be subject to discipline under the University's Student Conduct 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." (*In this course, everything you complete has an implied acceptance of the honor code.*)

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

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

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### **Daily Stories**

You will pitch and produce daily stories to be written during your story creator lab shifts.

Each story...

- Must be published on WUFT.org. If your story is spiked (not published), you will receive applicable credit for effort put forth. Stories are spiked for a number of reasons including editorial concerns, lack of timeliness, lack of news hook or

well-defined nutgraf, fact errors and many more. Having your story spiked will significantly affect your grade.

- Cannot involve *just* the UF campus or student life.  
A story that fails to meet both of those criteria likely will not be published.

- **Publishable Stories**

News, features, profiles and investigations work for WUFT News as long as they are:

1. **Local.** This means distinctly local people doing distinctly local things in North Central Florida. For example, a story about what people think about a new TV show is not local, while a story about a local person who appeared on the show would be.
2. **Timely.** Thus, a story about places to see live theater in Gainesville is not timely, while a story about a new remodeling project at the Hippodrome would be. **We almost never approve event stories**, as they are no longer timely by the time we edit and publish them. Breaking news, such as a fire at Best Buy, is handled within the INC's breaking news desk. If you are interested in covering breaking news, please alert your lab instructor and news manager. Breaking news will be and must be covered in real time.
3. **Aimed at adults.** Your audience is a middle-aged adult, not students. See the WUFT News intranet for information about our audience.
4. **Interesting.** Produce stories likely to generate audience engagement online and within the social media sphere for


## WUFT News.

Ex. — Write about the city council if it considers whether to allow liquor sales on Sunday. Ignore it if it considers routine changes in the liquor-license policy. In other words, skip boring stuff.

5. **Original.** Stories must be exclusive to WUFT News and original to this class. You cannot update a story you submitted for a previous class. If you follow up on a story from another news organization, take a different approach, **while explicitly crediting the original report.**

6. **Multimedia.** Each story must be accompanied by:

 A photograph taken by you.

 A broadcast-quality audio or video clip of 30 to 60 seconds.

 Gifs, infographics, charts, interactives, and the like.

*\*If your story does not have a visual asset, it will not have an accompanying “featured image” for the website and consequently, nobody will read it.*

*\*We do not accept photos of buildings or signs; we tell stories about people with images, video and interviews of people.*

## Story Approval

You will consult with your lab instructor and pitch your story idea via the [story pitch form on the newsroom intranet](#): Each story pitch must be submitted no later than **24 hours BEFORE** your shift and answer these five questions:

1. What is the main idea of the story?
2. Where did you get the idea for the story?
3. Why would people in North Central Florida care?
4. Whom, specifically, will you interview?
5. What picture and audio or video do you plan to get?

Your story pitch will automatically be uploaded into our [daily story budget Google Doc](#) **AS WELL AS** our Slack #pitch channel. You will receive feedback from news managers and your lab instructor in the Slack #pitch channel. You **MUST** monitor these forms and channels. *\*More explanation on Slack during orientation*

Use the feedback you will get from your instructor and news managers to shape your story or pursue another. It is often easier to pitch a story idea in a face-to-face conversation. **(You still need to submit your pitch)** You may also find that you are pitching similar stories as other reporters in the course, and depending on the strength of the pitch and how it is communicated, there may be instances where you see a similar story to what you pitch that have different outcomes in the publishing process ([Double check the pitch sheet via Newsroom Intranet](#)).

### **Story Length**

A story is about 500 to 750 well-chosen words. The word count is less important than is the quality of the story. In other words, a tightly written story of 500 words will receive a better grade than a 750-word story padded with fluff and redundant writing.

## Deadline

- Submit all stories as a Word document to [submit@wuftnews.com](mailto:submit@wuftnews.com) (These will populate into the [wuftnews@gmail.com](mailto:wuftnews@gmail.com) account).
- When submitting your stories, you must include ALL story assets (photos with captions, video or video link from WUFT YouTube account, Gifs, charts, graphs, etc...) in **ONE** email.
- Do not send links to Microsoft One documents or Google Docs (not everyone on the editing desk will have access to open causing problems in the editing process, which could cause your story to get spiked).
- Each story is due at the end of your shift. A late story will significantly affect your grade. **Do your pre-reporting before your shift so that you make your deadline.**

You may also submit a timely story *prior* to your deadline. The deadline serves as the last possible time to submit a story. We recommend working ahead of schedule so you do not fall into the trap of missing deadlines because a story falls through.

## Be Professional

When you are pursuing a story for WUFT News, adopt the persona of a professional journalist.

- Be early for interviews or appointments ([On time is late](#)).
- Dress appropriate to the story, which is usually business casual attire.
- Identify yourself as a reporter for WUFT News (You are working as a professional reporter; not a student. You will likely have greater response from your subject(s) if you do not introduce yourself as a student).

- Represent WUFT News to the outside world as a professional journalist would.

- **Sources**

Each publishable story for this class must have ***at least three named sources***. You'll find important standards for sources on the WUFT News intranet. You do not need to limit a story to three, and often in reporting you'd want to have six or seven potential voices in your planning to make sure you have the best quotes or a backup if a source falls through.

**At the top of your story list a telephone number for each source quoted in your story so Web producers can fact-check quotations.** Press releases do not count as sources. You may include them, but you need to balance your story with three other sources. Use PIOs sparingly and try for another expert voice whenever possible.

- **Multimedia Standards**

The WUFT News intranet:

- Details the criteria for good photos and for audio or video files.
- Offers advice and links for tips on how to take better photos and capture audio/video. See also: <http://training.npr.org/category/visual/>
- Suggests good apps for Android and Apple smartphones.
- A photo caption that identifies the people in the picture, their first and last names, age(s), where they are from/currently live, what is going on in the photo and photographer credit.
- The name of the person speaking in your audio file or video file.

- You can use the INC sound booths to record audio from a telephone interview. Instructions are on the WUFT News intranet.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using material without attribution. The solution is attribution, not paraphrasing. Attribute sources (“according to a press release”) and ideas (“reported last week in the Chiefland Citizen”). When in doubt, attribute. Plagiarism can result in a failing grade for the course.

## **Fabrication**

Fabrication is making up stuff, such as quoting sources you didn’t interview or inventing sources. Any fabrication will result in a failing grade for the course.

## **Story Grading**

- You will need to upload an electronic self-assessment to each INC Story Creator shift “assignment” in **Canvas**. (*\*This is in addition to your submission to [submit@wuftnews.com](mailto:submit@wuftnews.com) for editing and publication*)
- You may find the electronic form in the “Files” tab of the course Canvas site.

**These must be uploaded at the end of your lab shift.** Add the url to your published story to the assignment once it publishes. **If you do not upload your assessment before the assignment closes on Canvas, you will not receive credit.** If the assignment closes before your story is published, you can add the url in the comments section.

The self-assessment will be used along with observation to grade each shift. Published stories will be graded according to the following 100-point rubric:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
Pitch	Attend daily news meeting on time, dressed appropriately and prepared to go out in the field and report (there will be times that you may report from the newsroom, however). Have knowledge of the daily news in and around north central Florida to discuss and pitch for possible assignment.	20
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting: Appeals to a significant share of the audience</li> <li>• Sharable: Likely to be spread through social media or email</li> <li>• Timely: Fresh, with a timely news peg</li> <li>• Scope: Covers who, what, when, where, why and how</li> <li>• Sourcing: Full range of views; affected people interviewed</li> </ul>	30



Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length: Roughly 500 to 750 well-chosen words</li> <li>• Lead: 25 words max; either summarizes story or hooks reader</li> <li>• Concise: Gets right to the point; doesn't waste words</li> <li>• Readable: Smooth flow; active verbs; short sentences; descriptive</li> <li>• Clarity: Precise language without jargon or euphemisms</li> <li>• On Time: Submitted by end of shift</li> </ul>	30
Photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photo: Fits story; visually interesting; well composed</li> <li>• Caption: All people named</li> </ul>	20
or Audio/ Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall: A single person germane to the story edited to :30 to :60</li> <li>• Sound: Broadcast-quality (if not, 0 points)</li> <li>• Video: Camera does not move; speaker composed and lit properly</li> </ul>	20

## **Deductions**

- Fact error, such as a misspelled name ..... -50
- Source contact information missing ..... -10
- AP Style errors that impede readability ..... -10
- Fewer than three named sources ..... -100
- Sources have a personal connection to you ..... -100

## **Seize the Day**

This course enables you to create meaningful clips and expand your skill set into radio and TV. Creating great stories can advance your career, so give it your best.

## **Reporter Questions**

Once you submit your story on deadline for editing, you need to continue monitoring the progress of your story through publication. During the editing process of your story, if the editors have questions about your story (they almost always will and SHOULD) that need answered or addressed for it to be published, they will reach out to you via your preferred method of contact that you submitted the first week of class. You need to get back to them ASAP, preferably within minutes or hours, not days. You will have no more than TWO business days to answer all of the questions or it will be spiked. It is your responsibility to follow your story through publication. If errors are published, please notify the desk IMMEDIATELY to have corrected.

## **Web Producer**

### **Instruction**

Video tutorials for how to do your job as a Web producer are on

the WUFT News intranet. You will take quizzes on these tutorials the during your first lab shift. I will also be posting additional information on editing and Web producing throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to read the provided information.

## **Attendance**

Because the INC is a working newsroom, **attendance is mandatory**. If you are going to miss an INC shift for any reason – illness, family emergency, military obligation, etc. – you must notify your instructor no later than 30 minutes prior to your shift. If you need to miss a shift due to an emergency or illness, you must schedule a make-up shift with your course instructor. Failure to do so will result in a zero for the shift. Life happens for all of us, often at inconvenient times. We will work with you, but if you take advantage of the situation, it will reflect poorly on you and your grade.

## **Work Ethic**

When you are in the INC, you are working a job. That means you are expected to:

- Arrive early (before the 9:30 meeting) ready to work.
- Follow the INC business casual dress code on the WUFT News Intranet.
- Work efficiently. Get stuff done; don't dawdle.
- Focus on the job. Put away the cellphone and ignore Facebook, except with using them for stories.
- Be self-reliant. Use the WUFT News Intranet to learn how to do your job.
- Display a positive attitude. Smile and be kind. Don't be a

jerk.

- Show initiative. Help others, volunteer to chase a story and collaborate.

*\*Remember, many of you will be asking for references from news managers for internships and jobs. Work hard. Be professional and accountable. It will pay dividends.*

### **Web Producer Grading**

You will need to upload an electronic self-assessment to each INC web producer shift “assignment” in Canvas. You may find the electronic form in the “Files” tab of the course Canvas site.

**These must be uploaded at the end of your lab shift. If you do not upload your assessment before the assignment closes on Canvas, you will not receive credit.**

The self-assessment will be used along with observation to grade each shift. The 100-point grading rubric is:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Points</b>
Editing	Make the story better by checking facts & verifying source. Find holes and improve clarity while retaining the author’s voice. Help rather than hack.	25

Social Media	Disseminate original and aggregated content from our various wire services and member stations on WUFT News social media channels including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Mailchimp daily email newsletter and website. Monitor local, regional and state social media channels for breaking and developing stories.	25
Work Ethic	Arrive on time. Business casual dress. Work efficiently. Give full attention to the job. Be self-reliant. Display positive attitude. Show initiative	25
Headlines and Captions	Write <b>FIVE</b> social media-friendly, <a href="#">NPR-style headlines</a> for each story with no more than 10 words that emphasize how and why. Captions complement headline and lead.	25

**Note: Stories that are advanced in the editing process without a proper headline, excerpt, tags, category or featured image will be considered incomplete and result in a 50 point reduction on your shift assessment.**

**Lastly: Have fun.** You chose journalism likely because you enjoy telling stories, talking to people, experiencing the world, exposing the corrupt and holding public officials accountable. The more you embrace this course and the INC, the more fun you will have and better experience you will gain.

From the late David Carr: *Don't work on me for a better grade  
—work on your work and making the work of those around  
you better. Show industriousness and seriousness and  
produce surpassing work if you want an exceptional grade.*