

JOU 4202 – All Sections
Advanced Editing
Spring 2017

Class Meetings: Tuesday, Period 8 (3-3:50)
Weimer 3320
Each student also will work a 5-hour shift in the INC each week.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays 1-3 p.m. and by appointment. I also will be in my office, as much as possible, Tuesday & Thursday mornings. The class TA, Holly Cowart, will be around during most of the Monday and Wednesday shifts. If you need to meet with me and, for some reason, can't find me, please email and make an appointment.

About the Course

JOU 4202 students work on deadline as assistant city editors/news desk editors/news producers/assigning editors. The tasks are meant to reflect the kind of work editors are doing in today's professional newsrooms. The INC is producing *real* news for a *real* audience, so you are expected to act like a professional in every aspect of your work.

General description of the class

- You will work with and coach other students on their story ideas, participating in the budget meetings during your shifts, editing and rewriting stories to help hone them into publishable form, writing headlines and cutlines that accurately reflect story content and conform to AP style, collaborating with journalists across platforms -- online, radio and TV,
- You will help to produce content for all three platforms, giving you experience that will make you truly competitive for jobs in the professional world. During your INC shifts, your responsibilities will include:
 - Approving, declining or improving multiple story pitches each day. Help other students conceive, manage and produce long-term projects.
 - Help copy-edit online articles and broadcast scripts from both journalism and telecommunication students.
 - Communicate with the student managers for TV and radio programs, identifying web-first stories that are also available for broadcast.

- Handle breaking news events responsibly, including demonstrating effective use of Twitter, live-blogging, Facebook live, etc.
- Monitoring news wires, the station's news inbox and social media traffic.
- Handle questions from students and staff in a deadline environment.
- Post multi-media assets, including text, photos, audio and video, to WUFT.org.
- Produce one community engagement project during the semester, including writing and reporting a multi-media story focused on one specific under-covered community in the WUFT audience area. This community may be geographic, but it also could be a demographic group whose concerns typically receive too little coverage from area media. HINT: This almost certainly will NOT involve college students, or at least not primarily college students. More about this assignment appears later in the syllabus.

Essential skills

You've all been hand-picked for this class, so it's expected that you come in with the following skills. It's also expected that you will be even better with all of these skills by the time the class has ended.

- Outstanding news judgment
- Solid knowledge of AP Style, grammar, punctuation, etc.
- A positive attitude and openness to innovation
- The ability to cope with simultaneous competing demands
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to coach less experienced writers, offer constructive criticism and motivate better work on stories
- The ability to collaborate across platforms

Note: The Innovation News Center is a professional, working newsroom, so you're expected to treat your shifts there like a job. Do *not* schedule any other work, class meetings, doctor's appointments, meetings with professors or any other activity during your shifts. If you *must* miss a shift due to illness or some other unavoidable emergency, trade shifts with a classmate. You should dress in business-casual attire, appropriate for a professional newsroom, during your shifts – no jeans or shorts.

My role in the class: As often as possible, I will check in with you in the INC and, when other duties allow, I'll do my best to sit down and work with you. (I'm actually looking forward to this part a lot!) When I'm not physically available, I'll try to be reachable via text, email, or phone. (Text may be your best bet – I'll keep my phone with me.) If you have a problem, I will do my best to make myself available, to the extent that I can while balancing my other duties.

However, it's important that you know that most of the time, you're going to be on your own, working with the news managers, the graduate student news assistants and other undergraduate students, especially the JOU 4201 students assigned to Monday-Friday shifts. This will require self-discipline on your part. **During your newsroom shifts, you should ALWAYS be working on something for WUFT, whether it's editing, working with other student journalists or making progress on your community engagement project.**

Working with other students: There likely will be times when you need to provide constructive criticism of other students' work. There likely will be times when you reject students' story ideas or need to push them to dig deeper into a story, do more reporting, produce more balanced content, etc. These types of

activities are part of the job. Being a jerk is not, regardless of how frustrated you might be with the other student. In the INC, as in any other newsroom, you may encounter people you don't especially like. Learning to work productively with everyone, regardless of personality conflicts, is critical to becoming a professional.

Working with other instructors: Other instructors, including the INC director, the news assistants, and graduate teaching assistants, will also be supervising your work in the INC. You are expected to be courteous and responsible to ALL of them. If, at some point, you feel that there's a conflict between what I've told you to do and what someone else has said (this is quite unlikely), let me know. If you can't reach me, do what the person present is asking you to do, unless you believe it constitutes either a legal problem or an ethical violation. (Again, this is highly unlikely.)

Class attendance, participation, etc.: You are required to attend Tuesday afternoon class meetings. In addition, I expect you to come to class having read every local story posted on WUFT during the preceding week. We'll use this time to talk about what worked well, what could have been improved, what follow-up stories might make sense, etc. In addition, we'll be discussing a variety of topics, including many that will help to prepare you for the job hunt/interview process. We only have 50 minutes per week to do all of this. DO NOT BE LATE!!

Accommodations for special needs: If you have legitimate, documented special needs situation, I am more than happy to work with you to find accommodations. University policy requires students requesting classroom accommodation to register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide appropriate documentation to you, and you should provide this documentation to me at the beginning of the semester. Please do so, even if you do not believe you will need the accommodations. It is your responsibility to initiate this conversation early in the semester.

Required Materials

You'll need two books, both of which you should have already from previous journalism classes. Bring both of them with you to every INC shift.

- [*When Words Collide: A Media Writer's Guide to Grammar and Style*](#) by Lauren Kessler & Duncan McDonald.
- **AP Stylebook:** You are required to bring it bring it to your INC shift. You also should consider subscribing to the online version at <http://www.apstylebook.com/>. Subscriptions cost \$26/year. The online subscription offers email updates and keyword search for answers.
- The dictionary the INC uses is the [*Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition*](#). See [AP's Note on Dictionaries](#).

Other online materials:

- **Course Intranet:** Most details about how to function in the INC – from finding stories to writing headlines – are on the [WUFT News intranet](#). (The username is *newsroom* and the password is *newsroom*.)

- Depending on your preferences, we may use discussion on the course Canvas site, or I may set up a Facebook group for the class. At any rate, additional readings you'll need for class discussions will be posted on the Canvas site.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism or fabrication on any assignment in the class will result in a failing grade FOR THE CLASS.

For the communications professional, there hardly exists any graver crimes than plagiarizing another writer's work or including fabricated information in work submitted for publication. In short, it is YOUR responsibility to make certain you understand what constitutes plagiarism and to ensure that you give proper credit every time you draw on someone else's writing. It is equally your responsibility to ensure that you can back up every bit of information you include in a story, a caption or a headline.

- **Do not rely on what you think you've learned before.** I strongly recommend that everyone complete the free Poynter NewsU course called [Avoiding Plagiarism and Fabrication](#).
- Prof. Mindy McAdam has put together an excellent guide: <http://www.macloo.com/cheat/index.htm>.
- **If you have questions, ASK ME!** There's no penalty for asking questions, but the penalties for plagiarism are severe.
- **Be leery of Internet sources**, unless they are from government or other official websites. The more outrageous or astonishing the "facts" are that you've found online, the more likely it is that they either aren't accurate or are cherry-picked, taken out of context, etc.
- **Upload ALL assignments to the e-learning site and know that I will submit them to Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism.**
- **DO NOT turn in to me ANY work you previously have submitted to another instructor or that you plan to submit for any other class at UF or any other institution.** If you want to write on a topic you've worked on before, that may be acceptable IF you discuss it with me and get permission IN ADVANCE.

Please see the UF Office of Student Judicial Affairs website for definitions of academic dishonesty (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>). The violations most likely to be potential problems for students in this class include plagiarism, misrepresentation and fabrication. It is YOUR responsibility to understand what kinds of actions are prohibited. If a situation ever arises in which you think something you're contemplating MIGHT constitute one of these types of academic dishonesty, ASK BEFORE YOU DO IT. Apologies after the fact will never resolve the problem for anyone. I consider it part of my duty as a professor and as a journalism educator to report academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

Other students' work: If you suspect (or know for certain) that another student has plagiarized or fabricated information for any work submitted for this class, please contact me immediately and keep any documentation that led to your suspicions about the work. If you cannot reach me, bring the problem to one of the INC news managers. The instructor for that other student's class will decide how to handle the issue, but it's critical that we know right away that there is a problem with a story to ensure that no plagiarized or fabricated material is posted to WUFT.org or included in broadcast stories.

Course Grading and Assignments

Given that enrollment in this class is carefully limited to those students who've demonstrated their competency in 4201, it's entirely possible for every student in 4202 to earn an A in the class. However, those high grades are not guaranteed, any more than they would be in any other class. I use minus grades so that individuals who do superior work receive GPA points reflecting that accomplishment. Grades will not be curved. You can see how letter grades relate to grade points assigned at this [website](#). Final grades will be based on these break-points:

A- = 90-93.5%	A = 93.6%+	
B- = 80-83.5%	B=83.6-87%	B+=87.1%-89.9%
C- = 70-73.5%	C=73.6-77%	C+=77.1%-79.9%
D- = 60-63.5%	D=63.6-67%	D+=67.1%-69.9%
E = 59.9% or lower		

In general, I am reluctant to assign incomplete grades because they create an additional burden for both the student and the instructor for the following semester. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. serious illness), I may agree to assign an "I" grade. Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:

Newsroom shift work	600 points
Community engagement project	300 points
Sources report –	50 points
Issues report –	100 points
Final story/project --	150 points
<u>Weekly class participation</u>	<u>100 points</u>
Total	1,000 points

Assignments: You will receive more detailed instructions for each assignment. However, here's a basic rundown of each assignment so you'll have a sense of what each one entails.

Newsroom shift work: Your grade for this portion of the class will be based on the INC news managers' assessments of your work, in consultation with me. I'll ask them for an assessment at mid-semester, and I will discuss this assessment with you. That way, if any problems seem to have developed, you have a chance to improve before the final assessment, which will determine how many points you receive of the 600 total. Note: Merely showing up for your shift each week will earn you no more than 300 points. The other half of the points will be determined based on your performance as an editor, including how much you're able to improve student stories you work with, how self-directed and hard-working you are, your ability to work across platforms, etc.

Community engagement project: Journalism is meant to provide a voice for the voiceless. But we don't always succeed, and, to some extent, our failure to provide coverage that reflects the concerns of under-represented groups has played a major role in disastrously declining trust in the news media. Community engagement is not just about building audiences, although those touting community engagement tend to believe it will have that effect. Rather, community engagement is about building communities, and not only in the sense of "people who talk to one another;" community engagement, at its core, is about news organizations playing a role in deepening public discourse, making sure seldom-heard individuals and perspectives can be heard, and ultimately, strengthening democracy in one's community. We'll talk a lot more about this idea throughout the course, but outlined below are the individual assignments you'll complete in connection with this project.

Initial pitch: Early in the semester, each student will submit (in writing) and pitch to the class a proposal describing a group whose concerns tend to be ignored, especially in local media. One major purpose of this assignment is to get you out into the community, outside your comfort zone (to some extent). Therefore, your pitch likely will not succeed if you propose to focus on college students, college faculty, or any other "mainstream" group. Most local media do a mediocre job, at best, of covering the communities surrounding Gainesville, so one of the outlying towns – Newberry, Hawthorne, Starke, etc. – might be a community with whom you could engage. Alternatively, you may want to focus on a demographic group, such as older working-class adults, young adults who are not attending college, people with disabilities, etc. As you might guess, the greater the economic and cultural power the group has, the less appropriate it is for your project. There's no formal grade for your pitch, but you can't proceed with the rest of the project until it's approved.

Sources report: Most news coverage begins with a story idea. But because our lives aren't like those of the underserved groups in our communities, we aren't likely to know what stories they want to see told. So your first step is to find people in your chosen community who know what's going on there, who understand the concerns of people in their community, who can tell you how they wish WUFT would cover their community. Not all of these people will necessarily end up as actual sources in your final story or report. For this interim report, you'll need to identify at least 8 individuals within your chosen community, provide contact information for them, and summarize in a few paragraphs who they are, what they do, and how they're tied in to that community. This is not meant to be a story or stories; instead, think of it as the kind of information you might pass on to reporters who needed to understand more about this community. Hint: You must *talk* to – and *listen* to – these people, preferably face-to-face, to be able to write an acceptable summary for each one. Bonus points for including a photo of each source (or at least some of them) that tells us something about him/her and his/her role in the community.

Issues report: The purpose of this report is for you to describe at least three or four issues of concern to people in your chosen community. Each issue should clearly come *from* your sources, and each should reflect either a concern common among people in that community about which there has not been much reporting or a story that has been told in the media but with little or none of your community's perspectives included. The purpose of this report is to help you (and WUFT.org) understand what's important to the people in your chosen community and how *they* would like to see that story told in local news media. What do they want the broader local audience to know about their community's strengths, weaknesses, worries and fears? Your issues report also will include a proposal for how you plan to engage with this community to help WUFT tell their stories more effectively.

Final story/project: There are probably hundreds of ways of doing this, so be creative in your approach, and I'll encourage WUFT decision-makers to let us experiment. One option, of course, would be to produce a multi-media story (including *at least* text, photos and audio) focusing on one of the issues you identified in the issues report. Then follow up with community members, both those included in the story and others, to get their reactions to the story. However, there are many other options, including working with members of the community to help them tell some of their own stories (think NPR's [StoryCorps](#)); creating a blog in which you post updates, reflections and mini-stories about your interactions with your community and give members of that community the opportunity to comment, post their own stories, etc. (See the University of Oregon's [Science & Memory](#) project for an example); even setting up and managing a social media page (e.g. on Facebook or Instagram) that would give people in your focus community a place to tell stories important to them.

Because this could be a fairly time-consuming task, I'm open to allowing two students to collaborate. However, each student will be expected to produce his/her own source and issues report, and at least half of the sources and issues included in each student's reports should be unique to him or her. (So you might, for instance, have four sources in common, but you'll also need four additional sources the other person does not include.)

Note: This community engagement assignment is an experiment. Your grades will be based, to a significant degree, on the extent to which you can demonstrate that you've put a good faith effort into making it work and that you've learned a significant amount about a community with which you previously were not familiar.

Weekly class participation: You all play an important role in the success of the class. Come to class energized, prepared and ready to discuss the readings and the issues we're dealing with. Read all the locally produced stories on WUFT, and make notes if you find errors, holes, etc. When you do identify a way in which a story could have been improved, offer constructive criticism. Each week, I'll ask each of you to talk (briefly!!) about one story you worked on that you're really proud of and one on which you think you could have done better.

For your community engagement projects, help each other out by sharing your knowledge. Each of you will know what the others are working on, so if you come across information or sources that might be useful to someone else, jot down a note or two so you can share that information with others. The benefit you receive from the class will be directly proportional to how much effort you put into it, and collectively, the whole class will gain more if everyone is fully engaged. We're going to shoot for having your community engagement stories/projects published, which means there's potential for your classwork to benefit the entire community and WUFT.org, not just this semester but into the future as well.

Schedule of Topics & Assignments

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments Due
1/10	Introduction – Syllabus review, goal discussions, personal introductions	Note: Not required, but I'd encourage you to sign up for the free weekly newsletter on fact-checking from Poynter and the American Press Institute
1/17	Skeptical editing = interrogating stories. Intro to community engagement	Read: NPR Finds It's Not Skeptical Enough ; Be a Cautious Skeptic – Especially Now ; Special Series: Redefining Engagement (Read as many of the posts as you can get through, but at least 1, 3, 4, 5, and 9. They're not long.)
1/24	Coaching & working with reporters; More on community engagement	Read: Coaching reporters tipsheet; 10 tips for working with reporters who are sensitive to criticism ; Finish any of the posts you haven't already read in MediaShift's Special Series: Redefining Engagement ; also Engaging Communities Changes How Journalists Work
1/31	Better story idea = better stories	Read: 6 questions journalists should be able to answer before pitching a story DUE: Initial pitch for community engagement target group
2/7	Using press releases so they don't use you	Read: 'Patchwriting' is more common than plagiarism, just as dishonest ; 6 ways journalists can use press releases effectively
2/14	Writing better headlines, cutlines and captions	Read: 10 questions to help you write better headlines ; SEO 101 ; Cutline Writing Tips ; Sell Stories! Write Great Cutlines ; How to write great captions for your photos
2/21	Better design	Read: TBA DUE: Community engagement sources report
2/28	Knowledge-based journalism	Read: Tired of talking about Facebook? Here's what journalism needs to do to fight misinformation and fake news . Also, check out the American Press Institute's Fact-checking resources
3/5-11		
3/14	Getting rid of flabby writing: Editing for conciseness	Read: Clarity is Key: Making Writing Clean and Concise ; An Editor's Perspective: Tight Writing is Key DUE: Community engagement issues report & project pitch

3/21	Special topics: Cops & courts	Read: Word Watch: Allegedly Innocent Suspects ; 5 tips on how to desensationalize stories ; Identifying juveniles Recommended: free NewsU course On the Beat: Covering Cops and Crime
4/4	Special topics: Health & Education	Read: Tips for analyzing studies, medical evidence and health care claims ; Dear Journalists Covering Education, Let Me Explain
4/11	Community engagement, round II	No new readings this week. Instead, we'll discuss what you're doing for your community engagement projects
4/18	Course wrap-up	DUE: Community engagement story/project/final report