

## RTV 3303 Electronic News Writing and Reporting One Summer 2017



**Instructor:** Matthew Cretul, M.A.M.C.  
**Section:** 8887  
**Room:** 2050 Weimer Hall  
**Periods:** 7 & E1 on Mondays (5:00 PM – 8:15 PM)  
**Office:** G0-38 Weimer Hall. Hours announced 1<sup>st</sup> week of class  
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*RTV 3303 is designed to offer instruction and training in news gathering, writing, interviewing, and reporting to increase student knowledge base on the subject matter. Special emphasis is placed on improving writing skills, basic news production thought practical multimedia reporting assignments. Students receive additional practical experience in the WUFT newsroom where they will have the opportunity to apply the skills learned in the classroom portion of the course.*

### **Objectives and goals of the course include:**

- (1) Student will learn how to write news stories acceptable for on-air station, website, and social media use under real-world deadline pressure.
- (2) Student will learn the ability to record audio via phone or in-person, and edit audio.
- (3) Student will begin to learn the ability to write “sound stories”.
- (4) Student will develop an understanding of the variety of sources used in news sources.
- (5) Student will have an opportunity, and an expectation, that work produced in the class and the newsroom can and will be used on the air (and web) throughout the semester.
- (6) Student will be given the opportunity to voice your live or recorded work on the air.
- (7) Student will develop a better understanding of local, national and international news and current events.
- (8) Student will begin to develop their “nose for news”.

**Course Eligibility:** Student must be in the College of Journalism and Communication----Student must have received a “C” grade in RTV 2100 and RTV 3007, and passed the News Placement Exam. If you haven’t met this requirement, please come forward ASAP.

**Required Equipment:** you will be able to check out digital audio recorders for projects, and the newsroom has recorders for you to use as well (See guidelines for checking out equipment).

- Digital recorder (will be provided)
- SD card (will be provided)
- 4-6 AA batteries

### **Recommended Equipment:**

- A cell phone that can record audio, access and use social media, and take photos. Voice Recorder Lite is an option for Apple Users. Samsung and other android platform users can use their built-in sound recorder.

**Required materials:** WUFT News Handbook (Available on WUFT website)

**Class demeanor expected:** You are also expected to treat your instructor and classmates with respect at all times. Be on time for class---- weekly story pitches are usually presented at start of class and are allotted a certain amount of time. If you miss them, or are late, you will be penalized. **PLEASE PRINT BEFORE CLASS. DO NOT EMAIL WEEKLY PITCHES.** Class discussions are a vital portion of the course. They are where students can begin to openly analyze what they are learning in the course. Students are expected to participate in class discussions, silence all cell phones BEFORE class starts or be prepared to surrender cell phone to instructor if it disturbs the class.

**Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Students will be given specific times when evaluations are open later in the semester. Summary results of these and previous assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

**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.

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

**University counseling services and mental health services:**

*If you feel at any time as though the semester is getting too rough, or beyond your control and you need to access the university-provided counseling services, please don't hesitate to contact the instructor if you are unsure how to proceed, or which services are right for you. Otherwise, the info is below:*

**Website:** <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

**Phone:** 352-392-1575

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

### **Grading Components**

### **Grading Scale**

Website	5%	A	(93-100)
Newsroom Recap	5%	A-	(90-92)
Final Exam	10%	B+	(87-89)
Weekly Story Pitches	10%	B	(83-86)
Project One	10%	B-	(80-82)
Project Two	10%	C+	(77-79)
Project Three	15%	C	(73-76)
Project Four	15%	C-	(70-72)
Newsroom Work	20%	D+	(67-69)
		D	(63-66)
		D-	(60-62)
		E	(below 61)

**Late Work:** As the news industry is built around time management and down to the second timing, late work will not generally be accepted without penalty unless prior arrangements have been made, and a doctor's note or another letter (preferably from the university or a university-sponsored group) accompanies the work. While the news industry is strict on time, I understand sometimes life happens. If you for any reason feel your work will be late, PLEASE approach me before the due date to work out an acceptable alternative timeline. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, any work presented without prior alternative plans will not be accepted.

**Newsroom Work:** Training sessions will be held during the SECOND week of the semester at WUFT-FM in the INC. The sessions will be held at 6pm unless otherwise stated. **Attendance is mandatory!** You are required to work six hours per week during the semester at the station, which is where your newsroom grade is derived. **Newsroom shifts must be covered---Go to Forrest, Ryan, or Ethan with questions---if you can't work, you will need to get someone to work for you.** In the event of a holiday, when you would otherwise be scheduled to work, you must make up your shift work. This is also true if you are sick and can show documentation of your illness. In both cases your shift work will be made up either with you presenting an original story idea to one of the news directors at the station, or you will be notified of a story to cover on a day when you would not otherwise be scheduled to work. These additional shifts may be at night or on the weekends.

**Final Exam:** The final will consist of two essays written during the exam, the first will be on the role of news in today's society. The second will be on what you learned during the semester. More info to be given during the semester regarding final exam.

**Participation:** Participation requires attending class. Absences prevent students from participating in class discussions, lectures, activities, and guest speakers designed to aid them in their learning process. By not being present in class, student

## **Class Projects** (Individual Rubrics available on Canvas)

**Project One:** Wrap with two sound bites, 1:30 in length

**Project Two (Facebook Live video):** Event Story 1:30-2:00 in length

**Project Three (Feature story):** Wrap with 4 sound bites, 3:00-4:30 in length

**Project Four (In-depth wrap):** Wrap with minimum of three sound bites, 3:30-4:30 in length

**You will need to pitch a story idea at least one week before your project is due. You can email your pitches ahead of time. To the earliest timestamp goes the story.**

**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 reporter. This means getting your stories air, and for the stories to be published on the WUFT website, and having a means to present this work to potential employers. The goal is for you to 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 FIVE. You must be prepared to create a personal website to showcase your work. The most user friendly options to create your own website are Weebly, WIX, and Webs. A finished website will include any stories you did for the WUFT site, radio stories done for WUFT-FM, a professional Twitter, a LinkedIn account, a Google + account, a bio which is a summary of your resume on the home page, your resume, and photos of you working. You can go beyond the minimum requirement, but it should be something that will benefit you as you continue your career in media.

**Story Pitches:** Each week, in a team of three or so, you will present what the group believes are the most important local, national and international stories for the week. These are not just stories you are interested in, but that the WUFT audience would be interested in. Your group will have :45 to pitch each of the three stories and who you would interview to cover these stories. Think of this as a morning meeting pitch. Each group member will present one of the stories. You will be graded based on the stories you select, the justification, and who you would interview for each story. Your group's pitches will then be judged against the pitches from the other groups. There are only so many stories that will run during the news day, and this will be good practice pitching your stories to be selected to air. It is possible groups will present the same stories which is why you will want to explain who you would interview.

**Weekly Newsroom Recaps:** Select weeks, we will discuss what you worked on during your time in the WUFT newsroom. This will familiarize everyone with the local news flow, stories, and contacts. Additionally, it helps identify areas that not everyone may have worked in, or stories not everyone may be aware of. **YOU MUST BE PRESENT DURING THE PARTICIPATION TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS.**

**Class Modules:** The course is broken up into three modules, each designed to highlight a different and important skill or set of skills vital to being a sound news reporter.

**Module I:** *What is News?* (Weeks 1-3)

**Module II:** *You the Reporter* (Weeks 5-8)

**Module III:** *Types of News Coverage* (Weeks 9-13)

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week #1	5/8	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Begin Module I: What is News? <b>For the newsroom:</b> sign up for training <b>Additional Activities:</b> Class intro & info, syllabus recap
Week #2	5/15	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Story Flow <b>Projects:</b> Assign project one <b>In the newsroom:</b> Training begins
Week #3	5/22	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Local Angles <b>Projects:</b> Project one pitches due, Assign project two <b>In the newsroom:</b> Shifts start
Week #4	5/29	No Class – Memorial Day <b>Projects:</b> Project 2 story pitches due on class Facebook site
Week #5	6/5	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Begin Module II: You the Reporter <b>Projects:</b> Project one due <b>Additional Activity:</b> Provide websites, Newsroom Recap
Week #6	6/12	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Brand Management <b>Projects:</b> Project Two due, Assign project Three
Week #7	6/19	No Class, Summer Break <b>Projects:</b> Project Three Story Pitches due
Week #8	6/26	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Ethics & Opinions <b>Projects:</b> Assign Project Four <b>Additional Activity:</b> Newsroom Recap
Week #9	7/3	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Begin Module III: Types of Coverage
Week #10	7/10	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Dealing with Death & Those with Disabilities <b>Projects:</b> Project Three Due, Project Four Story Pitches Due
Week #11	7/17	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Courts, Crime Stories, & the Legal System <b>Additional Activity:</b> Check on websites, Newsroom Recap
Week #12	7/24	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Elections, Politics, & Covering meetings
Week #13	7/31	<b>Weekly Topic:</b> Emergency, Weather, & Fire Stories <b>Projects:</b> Project Four Due (8/4)