

# JOU 4201: News Center Practicum

**Fall 2017**

*Innovation News Center Labs:* Monday-Friday, periods 3-7  
(9:35a.m. - 2:45 p.m. — day determinate upon course section)

*Lecture:* Tuesdays, Period 9 (4:05-4:55 p.m.) Room: WEIM 1070

## **Teaching Assistants/Editors:**

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**Course Description** This is a newsroom experience course that produces and edits journalism in the Innovation News Center (Weimer 2300).

The INC is a professional newsroom for WUFT and WRUF/ESPN's TV, radio 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 by navigating 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. Majority of your time will be spent in the field and in the newsroom producing content and story assets for [wuft.org](http://wuft.org)

## 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 and password are both *newsroom*.

## Required Equipment

In addition to your written stories, you will be producing multimedia including still photographs, video, NPR quality audio, podcasts, and more. You will be able to check out HD/SLR cameras with accompanying tripods, audio recorders, studio lights, stands and backdrops as needed for your stories. You are able to use your own gear if you'd like, but all the multimedia assets must be of comparable professional quality.

Adobe Suite including Photoshop and Premiere Pro is available on the computers in the INC.

Suggested textbooks:

- *Inside Reporting*. Harrower, T., 2009. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. Majority of reporting/editing questions can be answered with this text.
- AP Style Book - Available via Newsroom Intranet (login is newsroom and newsroom)
- Clark, Roy P. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer, 10th Ed.* New York: Hachette Book Group, 2006.
- Kramer, M., Call, W., & Harvard University. (2007). *Telling true stories: A nonfiction writers' guide from the Nieman*

Foundation at Harvard University. New York: Plume.

- 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 the university 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.

**Lecture begins Monday, August 21.**

**Labs begin the week of August 28.**

### **Assignments and Grading**

Story Assignments (there are four, plus the pitches).....75%

Professionalism and Social Media.....25%

*\* Late assignments will result in the loss of one letter grade each day.*

### **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
		B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%
A	100-94%	B	86-83%	C	76-73%	D	66-63%
A-	93-90%	B-	82-80%	C-	72-70%	D-	62-60%

**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.*

## **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.

**CAUTION:** This is a professional course. The rules are likely different from 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 *Gainesville Sun* 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.

*\*We have business cards for you to hand out and credentials you may check out for assignments.*

## **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.

- Multimedia Standards as outlined on the Newsroom Intranet: (url is [wuft.org/newsroom](http://wuft.org/newsroom). Username is newsroom. Password is newsroom)
- 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.

**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. If you have even the smallest doubt or are confused about this or anything else in the course, PLEASE ASK.

**HONOR CODE** Violation of the honor code includes plagiarizing material from other sources or fabricating material, as well as other forms of cheating. Violations will result in a failing grade, and you will be dismissed from the journalism program and reported to the Honor Court. See the Department of Journalism web site for specific outline of honor code violation

**CLASSROOM NEEDS** Students requesting special classroom needs must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to instructor.